A Journey Through the Bible

By James T. Nichols

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By

JAMES T. NICHOLS

Author of

AROUND THE WORLD ON A FLOATING PALACE,
BIRDSEYE VIEWS OF FAR LANDS, ETC.

VOL. I

CREATION TO SAMUEL

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Introductory Word

The purpose of "A Journey Through the Bible" is to give a complete and connected narrative of the Bible story in the plainest possible language. It is sent forth with the hope that many will through it become interested in the Bible itself. Having traveled through the lands of the Bible, some of them several times, it is hard to keep from mentioning personal experiences and in some cases a descriptive word or reference to places as they are today is given.

Nearly all the illustrations are from pictures taken during 1923 by friends and traveling companions of the author. Rather than use imaginary pictures I have felt that actual photographs of places as they are today will be more helpful and pleasing to the readers. However, I hasten to say that three pages of illustrations are taken from "Light on the Old Testament from Babel," by Albert T. Clay, and are used with his permission as well as that of The Sunday School Times Co., the publishers of the book.

At this writing (December, 1923) the story is appearing weekly in the columns of the Iowa Homestead and Wisconsin Farmer, which go to the homes of about sixty per cent of the tillers of the soil in these two states. It appears in book form with the permission of the publisher and at the request of many of the readers of these papers.

It would be impossible to even name the many helpful authorities that were consulted during the years that this journey was being prepared. When it was first written there was no thought of publishing it in book form and it would now be out of the question to even name the authors consulted. Sometimes almost the exact words of some author may have been used in a sentence. The Pulpit Commentary was consulted very often, as was the commentary of Adam Clarke and others. The story of the Bible, by Charles Foster, and the Bible and Its Story, by Josephine Pollard, were also drawn upon heavily. For thirty years the author has been a minister of the gospel and has always taken great delight in trying to simplify the wonderful story given in the sixty-six books in the Bible with which so many are familiar.

THE AUTHOR.

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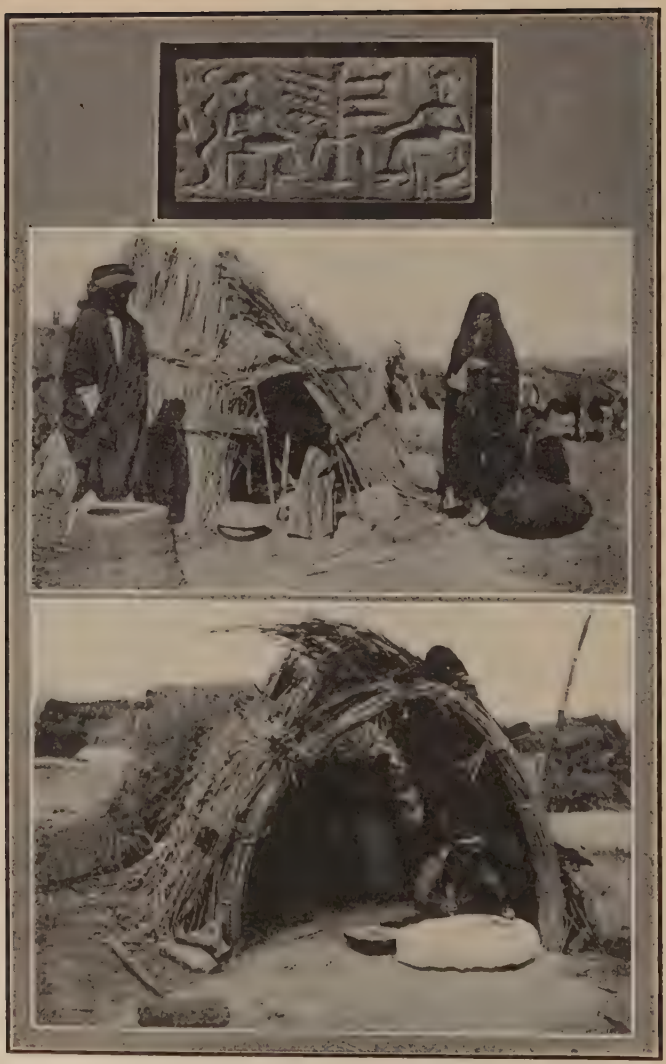


Photos by Albert T. Clay in Light on the Old Testament from Babel.

UPPER—SO-CALLED BABYLONIAN SCENE OF THE FALL OF MAN. AN IMPRESSION OF A SEAL CYLINDER, WITH SACRED TREE, FRUIT, AND SERPENT.

CENTER—HOME SCENE IN THE CAMP OF ARAB WORKMEN AT NIPPUR. IN THE FOREGROUND AN OVEN (THE OLD TESTAMENT TANNUR) IS SEEN.

LOWER—IN THE ARAB CAMP AT NIPPUR, ILLUSTRATING WOMAN GRINDING CORN, THE ANCIENT MILL FOR GRINDING FLOUR.

CHAPTER I

An Interesting Journey

STARTING from the Garden of Eden we are to go on a journey through the Bible. No company ever started out on a more interesting journey. It is our purpose to go leisurely along without being hurried. We will visit along the way, getting acquainted with humble farmers and herdsmen as well as with prophets, priests and kings. We will view the homes of those who toil as well as the places of the mighty.

Six Wonderful Days

A backward look shows that the world had been framed by the word of God. At first the earth was a shapeless mass. Darkness was everywhere. On the first day light was created. How long this day was no one but God knows. During this period of time the light was separated from darkness and the names day and night given.

During the period of time called the second day another great change came. The earth was inclosed in a ball of air, and sky appeared. This was called firmament. On the third day a separation of land and water was made and dry land appeared. Then came the carpet of green, and plants, herbs, flowers and trees. On the fourth day the hosts of other worlds appeared. The sun was made to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. The stars also took their places far behind the firmament. The earth was made to journey

around the sun, marking the years and seasons, and the moon around the earth, marking the months.

Creation's Crowning Glory

On the fifth day the waters literally swarmed with living beings. Great sea monsters, the sight of which would strike terror to the heart of man today, and winged creatures were in the sea, and every imaginable kind of bird filled the air and land. On the sixth day came the cattle and four-footed beasts of every kind. Near the close of the sixth day came the creation of man. His body was made out of the dust of the ground. Into this was breathed the breath of life and he became a living soul, and his name was Adam.

Now the Lord had prepared the Garden of Eden. It was a beautiful home. Here man was placed, surrounded with everything to make his life comfortable and happy. Before him were brought the various animals that he might name them. Where he got all the names is a mystery, but he surely found the right name for each one. This job must have been an interesting experience.

Man Unhappy Alone

In spite of all the beautiful surroundings, with flowers blooming and birds singing, the man was lonely and God saw that His work was yet incomplete. He said man needed a companion to share his joys and sorrows. The man was caused to fall into a deep sleep and the Lord took a rib from his side and made a woman for his helpmeet, and her name was Eve. The man was told that he must leave all and cleave to his wife. She was not

either to dominate him or be his slave. She was to be his companion, his helper, his love.

This man and woman were given dominion over all other creatures. They were to subdue the earth. Every beast of the field, fowl of the air, and fish of the sea was to serve them. God intended that steam and electricity, wind and lightning, should serve mankind, but it has taken thousands of years to find how to use them. In fact, we are just now beginning to discover the possibilities of the use of such things. As yet pain and sorrow were unknown. God Himself came into the garden and talked with this happy family. The greatest of all truths, however, was that man was created in the image of God and but little lower than the angels. Not only this, but man is linked to God—is His own child.

Mankind's Happiness Imperiled

Then came an event which changed the destiny of all mankind. This Garden of Eden was well watered and had trees bearing all kinds of fruit. In the midst of the garden was the Tree of Life. As long as the man and woman had access to this tree their strength was renewed and age had no effect. How long they lived in this blissful state is not known. There was not a cloud on their horizon, not a thorn in their pathway. There was no dread of evil nor fear of disease. Near this Tree of Life was the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil and its fruit they were forbidden even to touch. They were told that if they ate of the fruit of this tree they would surely die.

Now, the serpent was more subtle than any other creature. For all we know it may have walked at

this time. Some think that at this time all living creatures had the same language. At any rate, the serpent was able to talk to the woman. Coming to her when she was alone the serpent said that the Lord was deceiving them and if they ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge they would not surely die, but would become wise like God Himself.

The Woman Deceived

Little did the woman know that she was being deceived, that the serpent was being used as the mouthpiece of the devil. In fact, she knew nothing of the devil or evil. She knew that she had been told to let this fruit alone, but she wanted to be free from all restraint, and wise like God. This forbidden fruit was good for food and a delight to the eyes. She finally yielded to the temptation, tasted the fruit, and it was so pleasant that she gave some of it to Adam and he ate.

As soon as they had eaten of this forbidden fruit their eyes were opened and they became afraid. They beheld that they were naked and sewed leaves together and made a covering. In the evening when the Lord came into the garden they hid from Him. He called out asking why they were afraid. When Adam came from his hiding place the Lord asked him if he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. In reply he placed the blame upon the woman. When questioned she placed the blame upon the serpent. Then the Lord doomed the serpent to crawl upon the ground and eat dust, and said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head and thou shall bruise his heel."

Then the Lord told the woman that only through pain and sorrow should she bear children and that the man would rule over her. Because of his strength she would depend upon him and sin would cause him to make her his slave. The man also was doomed to a life of toil and great hardship. Thorns and thistles would grow wherever he planted and he would earn his bread by the sweat of his face. To keep the man and woman from eating of the fruit of the Tree of Life and living forever the Lord drove them from the Garden of Eden, but before doing so made clothing and put it upon them.

Driven from Eden

An angel with a flaming sword was placed at the gate, forbidding their return. It was a sad experience for them to be driven from Eden, where they had been so happy until they disobeyed the Lord. Their communication with God was severed. Their sin had blocked the way to the throne of grace and it was a long, long time before there was a single prayer.

Now came an event which made all tremble with fear. Of course, children were born and grew to manhood and womanhood. God had taught Adam and Eve how to approach Him and they taught their children. We do not know how many children they had when this terrible event happened, but it had to do with two of them directly. Their names were Cain and Abel. They had been taught how to offer sacrifice for their sins. Cain was self-willed and determined to offer his sacrifice in his own way and it was rejected. Abel was submissive and offered his sacrifice ac-

cording to the command of God and it was accepted.

When Cain saw that his own offering was rejected and that Abel's was accepted, he flew into a rage and killed his brother. My! What must have been his feeling when he saw his brother's eyes close in death! It surely was a terrible moment. What must have been mother Eve's feeling when she looked into the white face of her dead boy! The first death among men! When death enters our homes today the strongest tremble with fear. When God spoke to Cain he tried to shield himself and asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Where Cain Got His Wife

When the curse was pronounced upon Cain there went out from his heart a wail the like of which no man had ever heard before. God placed a mark upon him that branded him as a murderer. He must have been married, for surely no woman would have married him after that mark was placed upon him. Where he got his wife has been the cause of much speculation, but the record is silent upon that question. In fact, only a few things are recorded and they are for a definite purpose. Had the entire history of the race been written no one would ever get the time to read it all. We are told, however, that Cain went out from the old home and into the land of Nod.

In the course of time Cain built a city and called it Enoch, this being the name of his eldest son. Other children were born, grew up, were married and had children of their own. Lamach was the first polygamist and his wives' names were Adah and Zillah. The son of the former was the in-

ventor of musical instruments and the first great musician. The son of the latter was Tubal-Cain and he was an instructor of workers in brass and iron.

Coming back to the original family, years after Cain left home Seth was born. This boy was the image of his father. Eve felt that the Lord had given them this child to take the place of Abel. When Seth grew to manhood he called his first-born son by the name Enos and it was in the days of Enos that men began to pray to the Lord again. Generation after generation lived and passed away. Most all that was said about a man after his birth and life was that "he died."

Enoch Walked With God

Passing through these old-world cemeteries, however, we find one vacant spot. One man never died and this fact is like a rainbow of hope on the dark clouds of the age. This man's name was Enoch and his home must have been a happy home. At least Enoch was a good man, for the record says, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." One of the sons of Enoch lived the greatest number of years that any human ever lived on earth. His name was Methuselah. The old problem, "How does it come that the oldest man that ever lived died before his father," is easily answered, for his father never died.

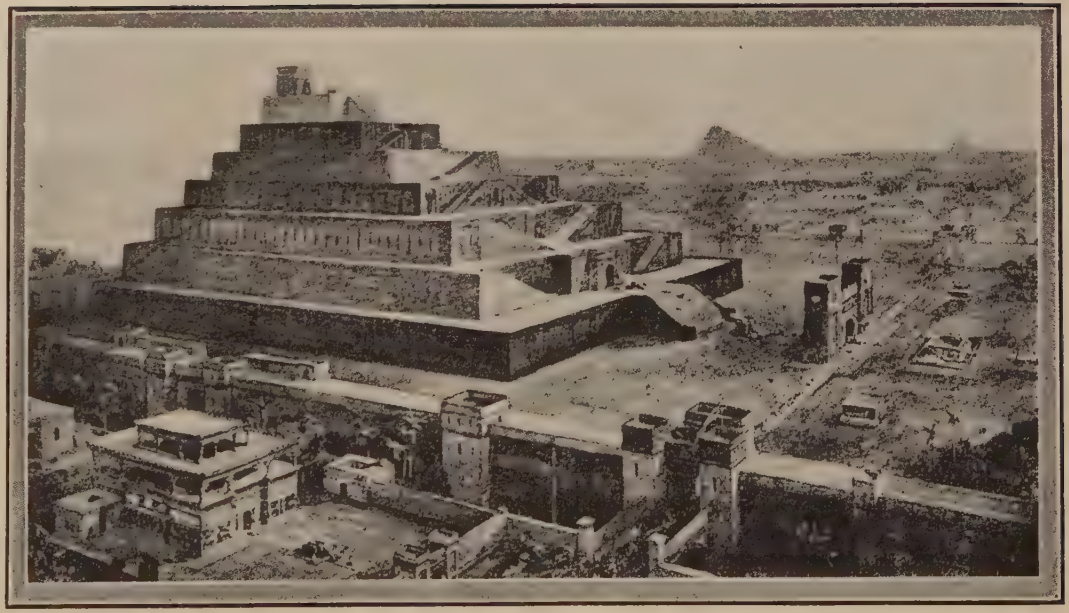


Photo by Albert T. Clay from Light on the Old Testament from Babel.

SIMPSON'S PICTURE (RECONSTRUCTION) OF THE TEMPLE ESAGILA AND ITS ZIGGURAT, THE "TOWER OF BABEL."

CHAPTER II

An Unfortunate Marriage

THE sixth chapter of Genesis opens with an unfortunate marriage. The sons of God married the daughters of men. As noted in the first chapter, it seems that when Seth was born his mother, who had mourned for Abel, felt that this child was from God, and she regarded him as a son of God. The Sethites therefore called themselves by the name of Jehovah. All others were spoken of as the children of men. Now, these Sethites (sons of God) looked upon the daughters of men (other families) and saw that they were fair and married them. It proved an unfortunate marriage.

It is hard for a man to live upon a plane above that which his wife lives and if a man marries a bad woman she is almost sure to pull him down to her level. In this case things went from bad to worse. Society became rotten to the core. Every imagination and thought of man's heart was evil. There was no hope for reform and God gave them up. At the beginning man was given the power to choose for himself and in spite of all influences brought about to persuade him to do otherwise he chose to do wrong. God indicated that His spirit would not always strive with man. It grieved His heart that man would not turn from evil and God said He would give man one hundred and twenty years more and

if there was no improvement He would destroy all and begin over again.

A Man of Great Faith

Now, there was one good man and he had a good wife. His name was Noah. He was a preacher of righteousness and walked with God. Just a few strokes of the pen tell us all we know about him. By this word, however, we see that he was a heroic character and that his faith was sublime. God told Noah what was about to happen and made a covenant, or agreement, with him.

He was told that a flood would come and sweep all away. But God outlined a plan by which he might save himself and family. He was told to construct a large boat, or ark. It is a remarkable fact that the dimensions of that boat are practically the proper dimensions of the great ocean liners that plow the waves today. The Lord never asked a man to do a thing without telling him exactly how to do it. He gave Noah complete instructions as to how to build this boat; told him how long, wide and high to make it, the number of windows and doors to put in it, how to cover it and all about it.

Noah Built the First Ship

Noah went to work with a will. He followed instructions exactly. As the Lord commanded Noah, so did he, is said again and again. Of course Noah was the laughing stock of the whole country. The loafers no doubt sat around and whittled and made slighting remarks. He was likely called a crazy man and mocked and jeered at and made the butt of many a joke. But the

great man toiled on and on. He tried to tell them about the great calamity that was coming but they wouldn't listen to him. Finally the last board was sawed. The last brushful of pitch was spread. The rooms and cages and pens were all arranged, for he was to take a pair of each kind of animals, birds and reptiles in the ark with him and his family. Food was procured and stored away. No doubt excitement ran high all over the country. Beasts were corraled. Birds were caged, and everything made ready.

Entering the Ark

This preparation to enter the ark must have been a wonderful event in that part of the country. Whole neighborhoods turned out to see the show. The order that prevailed as the animals entered the ark was simply amazing. Here was complete dominion over the beasts of the field. Wild beasts were tame and easily handled. It is an interesting fact that civilized people raise the brute creation to a higher condition than savages have ever done. A dog is a converted wolf. A cat is but a tiger civilized. After the last bird and beast was in, Noah made his last appeal to those gathered about. Once more he told them that a great flood was coming but they went on arranging for their wedding parties just the same. Then Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, went in and the approach was torn away. Then a strange thing happened. The great door of the ark was shut and sealed without the aid of human hands.

The Greatest Storm of History

Then perhaps there was a great silence, a calm before the storm. The dark clouds gathered. The lightning flashed and the thunder roared. The very windows of heaven were opened. For forty days and nights the rain never ceased. Tradition tells of terrible scenes that took place as the mob gathered about the ark. The people had gone on in their wickedness to the very last hour.

Noah's warning was unheeded, but now when it is too late the people saw their folly. Artists have pictured terror-stricken human beings and beasts of the forests mingling together on the tops of high cliffs as the waters arose. No calamity either before or since could possibly equal this one. Only those in the ark were saved. We are told that the world will be destroyed again at the judgment day, and the ark which saved the righteous at the time of the flood is a type of the church which Christ established to save the righteous at the last day.

A Counterfeit Always Implies a Genuine

In passing, it may be noted that nearly every nation has an account of the flood. Most of these are counterfeits of course, but a counterfeit always implies that there is a genuine. Scientists tell us that if we had no Bible we could know positively that such a calamity did at one time visit the earth. Then in the great stone library found in the ruins of Nineveh are the "deluge tablets" that tell the whole story. The great British Museum in London has not only a portion of the Babylonian account of the flood but accounts of other nations as well.

For many months Noah and his family were shut in the ark, but God never forgets His own people. The great boat was tossed about and finally rested on Mount Ararat. As the waters receded, a dove was sent out but returned. After another seven days the dove was sent out again and returned with an olive leaf. After waiting another seven days, Noah decided it would be safe to disembark. It must have been a lonely family that stepped forth on the ground again. The first thing that Noah did was to build an altar and offer sacrifice to the Lord. This was an expression of family gratitude for salvation.

The Rainbow Placed in the Sky

At this time the Lord assured Noah and his family that there would never be another flood. The token of this promise, or covenant, was the rainbow which was set in the cloud. Were it not for this sign the fear of another deluge would haunt mankind. Every rainstorm would strike terror to the bravest heart. Someone has beautifully said that wherever the rainbow arches the sky it spells the word providence to all who can see its meaning. It declares the loving thought of God and teaches us to be kind to one another and to the beasts as well, for they are included in the covenant.

Before bidding Noah goodby we are compelled to behold one of the saddest of all scenes. He is now an old man. His courage has been heroic, his faith sublime. But let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. This grand old man fell from his high estate and landed in the

gutter dead drunk. His life which had been such a beacon light now becomes a danger signal.

The Tower of Babel

Time hurried on. The three sons of Noah each went his way. From the hills they went to the plains. Their children became numerous and powerful. Nimrod became a mighty hunter and builder as well. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says he planned the Tower of Babel. People by this time began to think they could live without God. They said let us build a tower up into heaven. They made brick and burned them thoroughly. They started the building. They had but one language. When they had the building nearly a thousand feet high, the Lord came down and confused their language. They could no longer understand each other and had to quit.

Eusebius, the Father of Church History, gives the Chaldean Legend of the Tower of Babel which is similar to the Bible account in many respects. He says, "Not long after the flood the ancient race of men were so puffed up with their strength and tallness of stature that they began to despise and condemn the gods and labored to erect a very lofty tower that is now called Babylon, intending thereby to scale the heavens. But when the building approached the sky, behold, the gods called in the aid of the winds and by their help overturned the tower and cast it to the ground. The name of the ruin is still called Babel, because until this time all men used the same language; but now there was sent upon them a confusion of many and diverse tongues."

The Wonderful Character of Job

We have already passed over about two thousand years of Bible history and it might be well just here to get acquainted with a man by the name of Job, whose writing is believed by some to be the oldest book of the Scriptures. Job was a wealthy prince of Idumea, with a large family, many servants, vast herds and great riches. He was also a religious man of powerful influence.

It seems that Satan argued that the reason Job worshipped the Lord was because he was rich and prosperous and had a happy family, and if these were all taken away he would curse the Lord. The evil one was given the power to take all these from him, but he was still true. Then it was suggested that if his health was taken he would change, and his body was smitten with boils. In his affliction, his wife gave up hope and told him to curse God and die.

If a Man Die Will He Live Again?

But in these dark days Job was trying to solve the problem of human life and asked the great question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Still later on he uttered the heartcry of the race when he said, "O, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor!" Still later he seemed to come to a conclusion about the matter for he said, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at a latter day upon the earth; And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

The wonderful story of the friends who came to visit Job in his affliction, and their discussion

with him regarding the great problems of sin and suffering, cannot be touched upon in this journey. We see in this, however, that Job was a man of great learning, knowing very much about astronomy, about mining, about the great deep and the habits of monsters that dwell therein.

It is pleasing to know that Job came out all right in the end, that the Lord blessed him with greater riches, and a happier family, and brighter hopes than he had before these terrible calamities came upon him, and that his character stands out as one of the greatest patriarchs of all ages.

CHAPTER III

The Scattering of Civilization

AFTER the confusion of tongues the people were scattered in all directions. This event broke up the unity of the race, for by this method only could the power of evil be broken. As the centuries went by, the descendants of the three sons of Noah became three great peoples. As they increased in numbers, the power of evil also increased and the people grew worse and worse. God had told Satan that the time would come when the seed of the woman would bruise his head. When the flood came and swept away all but a single family, the case seemed almost hopeless. Now the new people are going toward evil rapidly. But the Lord has a different plan this time to save the race. He is going to reveal Himself to the world through His own Son, but the world must be prepared for this wonderful event.

Among all the people at this time there was found one man good enough to be the father of a nation through which the Son of God could come to earth, but that man was surrounded by idolatry. God, therefore, appeared to him and told him to get away from his own land and people and go into a land that would be shown him. That man's name was Abram, which was afterwards changed to Abraham. It seems that before this appearance of Jehovah that Haran, Abram's brother, had died and left a son whose name was Lot, and Abram had adopted him, as he had no children of his own.

Abram Moved to a New Home

Abram's wife was a most beautiful woman and they had a happy home. However, Abram's father, Terah, was living with them. At the call of God, Abram and his wife, together with Terah and Lot, took their servants and herds, and started for this strange new country. Leaving Ur of Chaldea, they journeyed toward the northwest until they came to a place called Haran where they stopped. Here Terah died. God then appeared to Abram a second time, telling him to continue his journey. This time the Lord confided to Abram that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. This is really the first promise of Christ ever made to mankind. True, the reference of the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent undoubtedly pointed directly to the coming of Christ, but this was in the form of a declaration and was made to Satan.

Driven to Egypt

It was a lonely company of three people, with their servants and substance, that journeyed across the plains and deserts toward their new home. They were now traveling southwest and when they reached the land that was to be their future home, the first thing Abram did was to build an altar unto the Lord. This was at Sichem, and here was the first sacrifice ever offered on Palestine soil. A little later they went a few miles farther to another place and built another altar. Soon a famine came and to save their lives the family emigrated to Egypt.

On entering Egypt an event occurred that nearly cost the happiness of the family. Abram got into

trouble over his wife, in fact he lied about her. She was so beautiful that Abram was sure that the king of Egypt would fall in love with her and kill him that she might become the queen. Abram told Saria about his suspicion. As she was really her husband's half sister, the plan was that she be palmed off as his sister.

Result of a Lie

Sure enough, when the king saw Saria he fell in love with her and ordered her brought into the palace. He also treated Abram royally for her sake. At this point the Lord entered the scene and sent a plague upon Pharaoh's family. It soon developed that the plague was caused by the presence of Abram's wife. When Pharaoh called Abram he confessed the whole thing, and for a wonder found favor in Pharaoh's company.

How long Abram and his family stayed in Egypt is not made plain, but it must have been for some time. At any rate, when he came out of Egypt he was immensely rich. The Jewish historian says that while Abram was in Chaldea he became learned in mathematics and astronomy and communicated these things to the Egyptians. Perhaps they paid him well for teaching them these and other sciences.

A Fight Among the Herdsmen

On coming back to his home, which later became known as Canaan, Abram built an altar again and re-established worship with Jehovah. Some years went by and both Abram and Lot were great men. Their peace was marred, however, by their herdsmen getting into trouble. Likely

the quarrel was aggravated by the people who wanted to see trouble between the two men and it finally became very serious. In settling the difficulty we see the great heart of Abram at its best. He called his nephew to his side and said in substance: "Now, son, we have always been good friends and it is too bad that our herdsmen cannot get along together. Seeing they cannot, it will be the best thing that our herds and flocks be separated. Now, just look around; you can take the hills and I will go to the plains toward Sodom, or I will go to the hills and you can go to the plains."

Here Lot made the mistake of his life. What a chance he had to say: "Well, uncle, you have been a father to me and now that you are well along in years, and I am young and strong, you take the plains toward the city and I will go toward the hills." But Lot didn't do anything of the kind. He just gobbled up the whole valuable, well watered plain, pitched his tent toward Sodom, and let his Uncle Abram go toward the hills. No doubt Abram was grieved at the ungratefulness of the one he had raised as his own son, but he never said a word.

Lot Moved His Family to Sodom

Sodom was a powerful as well as a wicked city, and it was not long after Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom" until he had moved into the city. Although it was terribly wicked, Lot did not hesitate to take his family into Sodom. Some people today are willing to move their families into the suburbs of perdition and then wonder why their children are not interested in things

that are good and elevating. While Abram communed with God, Lot went to the devil.

It was not long until Lot had a world of trouble. In fact he almost lost his life. The kings of four surrounding nations, and the kings of Sodom and four other cities got into a pitch battle, and Sodom was taken by the enemy. Lot was taken prisoner. One of the Sodomites escaped, however, and hastened to the home of Abram and told him the story of Lot's misfortune.

Abram Rescued Lot

At once all was excitement around the Abram homestead. Abram quickly got his shepherds and servants together, three hundred and eighteen of them, and they went galloping over hills and plains in hot pursuit. On the fifth night they overtook the enemy, rescued Lot and the other prisoners, together with all the booty. On his return to Sodom, Abram was met by that wonderful and mysterious person called Melchizedek. This man was King of Salem, afterwards called Jerusalem, and a priest of God. Knowing that Abram and his entire company were tired and hungry, Melchizedek had a store of provisions ready for them as they passed along the dale. Abram was so grateful to this priest that he gave one-tenth of all the spoils as an offering to Jehovah. This is the origin of tithing.

The King of Sodom also came out to meet and thank Abram for his good work and offered him all the booty he had taken, but Abram refused even as much as a shoestring, lest it be said in after years that the King of Sodom had made him rich. Although, by the rights of war, this

property belonged to Abram, he refused to have it said that he was under any obligation whatever to an idolatrous king. He rescued Lot only because of his love for him.

Entertaining Angels

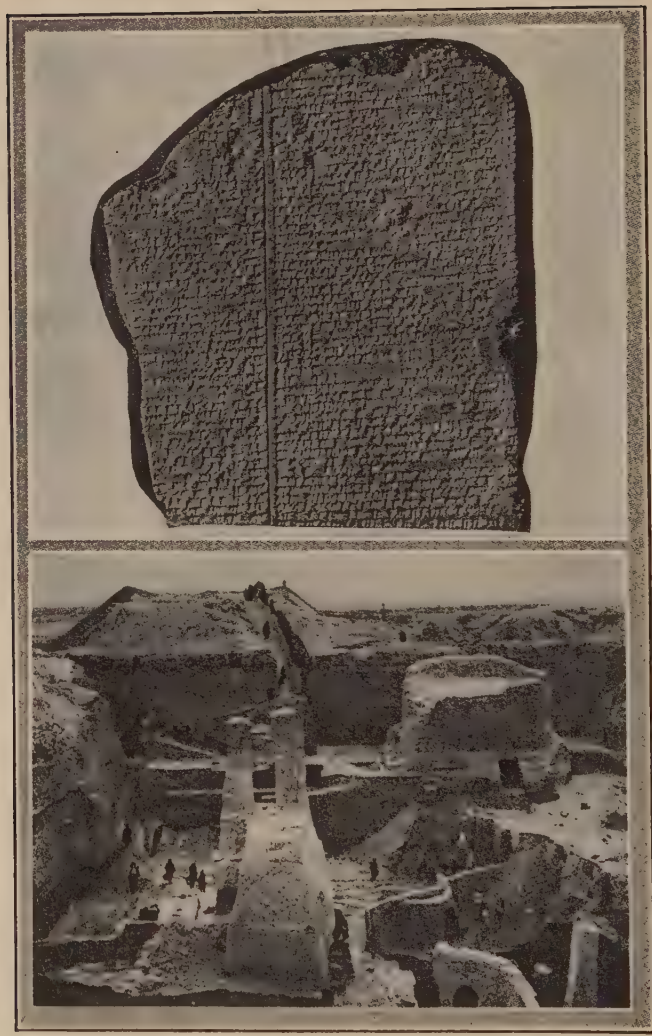
Passing over a number of events, one of which was the changing of Abram's name to Abraham and Saria's name to Sarah, we come to an event of more than ordinary interest. About noon on a hot day, Abraham was sitting in the door of his tent, when three strangers appeared. Running to greet them, Abraham invited them to stop and partake of his hospitality, which they did. Sarah prepared a fine dinner and after eating they all visited together for awhile. During this visit these men predicted that Abraham and Sarah, who were childless, would have a son born to them in their old age. It pleased Sarah and she laughed about it, but Abraham took the matter seriously.

As the strangers arose to go, Abraham went along with them to show them the best road. These strangers were angels of God and they confided to Abraham that on account of their extreme wickedness the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed. Two of the angels went on to Sodom but the third was detained for some time by Abraham in an effort to save the city of Sodom. This great man was burdened as never before when he thought of Lot and his family.

Abraham Pleading for Sodom

In all the literature of the world, there is nothing more sublime than Abraham pleading for

Sodom. He had been a father to Lot and loved him as his own son. Now he thinks of him and his family and their friends in the doomed city. Surely there are fifty of them altogether and he pled with the Lord to save the city if fifty righteous were found. When the request was granted he thought maybe there were not fifty and pled with the Lord to save the city for forty-five. When this was granted he came down to forty, then to thirty, then to twenty, and finally to ten and the Lord promised to save the city if ten righteous people were found. Someone has playfully said that Abraham was a typical Jew in getting the Lord from fifty to ten.



Photos by Albert T. Clay.

UPPER—THE BABYLONIAN DELUGE STORY.

LOWER—EXCAVATIONS WITHIN THE TEMPLE AREA AT NIPPUR—FROM LIGHT ON THE OLD TESTAMENT FROM BABEL.

CHAPTER IV

Evening in a Great Wicked City

IT was evening in the city of Sodom. All the shows, dance halls, bawdy houses, and other places of evil were going at full blast. At the gate of the city sat Lot, perhaps as an officer of the law. Seeing two strangers approach he saluted them and invited them into his home for the night. They courteously refused at first, but he insisted and they went home with him, had supper, and decided to stay all night. As it turned out this act of hospitality saved Lot's life, for these were the angels that Abraham had entertained in his home.

Before they retired for the night, a boisterous mob surrounded the house and demanded of Lot that the strangers come forth. Lot went out among them, spoke kindly to them, telling them that the strangers were his guests for the night and that he would not have them harmed. But the mob was made up of men who were bent upon evil and they pushed and fought until they were about to break the door down when the angels opened it quickly, pulled their host in and slammed it shut. The angels then smote the mob with blindness so the men could not find the door again. They then revealed to Lot the city's doom, asking if he had any relatives or friends, and then told him to go for them at once.

A Thrilling Escape

All was excitement in the household and Lot hurried to the homes of his sons-in-law and told them what was about to happen. He had but little influence with them, however, for they made fun of him. Perhaps they thought that he was getting childish or losing his reason. Anyway he could do nothing with them and went back home very sad. Early the next morning the angels hurried Lot and his wife and two daughters out of the doomed city. As they lingered the angels took them by the hands and almost dragged them to the edge of the city, then told them to go as fast as they could and not even take time to look back.

The temptation to look back was too great for Mrs. Lot, however, and she looked back. This proved to be her last look for she lost her life and her body was turned into a pillar of salt. This incident is one of the danger signals of history. Hundreds of years later the Master used it as a powerful illustration when He said, "Remember Lot's wife." The incident is mentioned in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Zephaniah in the Old Testament, and by both Peter and Jude in the New Testament. The mountains near the supposed site of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are great piles of rock salt.

Abraham Lied About His Wife Again

The destruction of Sodom was too much for the old patriarch. To look across the desolate country where the great prosperous cities had been located, brought too many sad memories to Abraham. All this part of the country looked about

as desolate and forsaken to the writer some years ago as any spot on the globe. Now Abraham moved away from the old scenes. He went across the mountains and settled in the country of Gerar.

While in Gerar, Abraham got into almost the same trouble as when in Egypt twenty years before. He lied about his wife. This must have been his besetting sin, his yellow streak. One would think that the Egyptian experience would still have been fresh in his memory but it seems not. Abimelech, the King of Gerar, was captivated by this beautiful woman. As Abraham had told him she was his sister, he had her brought into the palace. That night the king dreamed that he was dying. Early the next morning he sought Abraham and told him about his dream. Abraham confessed that he had deceived the king who called him on the carpet and condemned him severely for his folly.

No House Large Enough for Two Families

While in Egypt years before, Sarah had secured an Egyptian maid whom she called Hagar. This maid had a son called Ishmael. When the son, promised by the angel, was born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, they called him Isaac. Of course he was the pet of the household and his father and mother were foolish about him. When he was but a little boy they had a party for him. Sarah happened to see Ishmael, the son of the Egyptian maid, mocking her boy and she called Abraham at once. She told him plainly that his house was not big enough for two women and their boys, and that Hagar and her child could not stay another day.

A Sad Scene

It was of no use for Abraham to argue the case with his wife, and perhaps he was not foolish enough to do so. But it nearly broke his heart for he had learned to love Ishmael very dearly. It was with a very sad heart that, early the next morning, he gave Hagar some food and a bottle of water and bade her and her little boy goodby, and sent them away. But few scenes can be sadder than that of this faithful woman and her child turned out from home and sent away alone.

The sad mother and child wandered far away and had a terrible time. Finally the food and water were exhausted and the child was starving. So great was the little fellow's pleading that his mother left him under a tree and went far enough away that she could not see him die. Only a mother can imagine the anguish of this woman's heart in this dark hour. Though turned out and forsaken by all friends, God did not forget her. He saved her life as well as the life of the child. Ishmael grew to manhood and became the founder of a great nation.

Abraham Willing to Sacrifice His Son

Now came an event that is hard to understand. God called Abraham to do a very strange and most unusual thing. He was to take his son Isaac upon the top of a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. Notice carefully that he was not commanded to slay his son, as many suppose. While it is true that Abraham supposed that he must slay his son, yet the Lord had not so ordered. How often one wonders if Abraham hinted to his wife what he was about to do. At any rate, it

was with an aching heart that he took Isaac and a couple of young men, with all the necessary paraphernalia, and started out on that terrible journey.

On the third day Abraham saw the mountain to which he was to go. He had the two young men stop, then with knife, fire and wood, he and Isaac started on. How his great heart bled and tears streamed down his face when Isaac said, "My father, behold here is fire and wood but where is the lamb for the offering?" How he turned his face away and said, "My boy, God will provide Himself with a lamb for the offering." Great answer, that! When all was ready and Abraham had his hand ready to strike, God called. All can imagine his joy when he looked and saw a ram with his horns fast in the thicket and offered it as a sacrifice.

A Heart-broken Old Man

With all his faults Abraham was one of the grandest of men. No wonder he is called "the father of the faithful." Such implicit confidence in God as he had is seldom found. Later on came an event that made this mighty man tremble like the giant oak in the forest during a terrific storm. For more than a hundred years Abraham and Sarah had traveled down life's journey hand in hand. But the last day of their sojourn together finally came. Sarah took sick and it was not long until her beautiful face was cold in death. For days Abraham sat by her side and refused to be comforted. The fountain of the great deep had broken and his heart was saddened as never before.

Finally the broken-hearted patriarch stood up from before his dead and said to the sons of Heth, "I am a stranger and sojourner with you; give me a possession of a buryingplace with you that I may bury my dead out of my sight." These people were greatly moved by the grief of their aged neighbor and were just as kind as they could be. They told him that he was a mighty prince among them and that he might take his choice of all their sepulchres absolutely free. But Abraham would not bury the body of his loved one in a tomb that was not paid for. So he picked out the Cave of Machpelah and paid the full price for it, four hundred shekels of silver.

It is a remarkable fact that Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is the only woman of all Bible history whose age, death, and burial are noted. In all this, however, we call to mind that Abraham had all faith in a future life, for the writer of the Hebrew letter says, "He looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God."

CHAPTER V

A Bashful Young Man

IT will be worth while to stop in the home of Abraham long enough to get a glimpse of the customs of the time. After Sarah died Abraham married again, and had six more sons. But Isaac was his chief joy. As the years went on Isaac took charge of the flocks and herds. He was about forty years old and had paid no attention to the girls. Abraham was anxious for Isaac to get married, but of course he wanted him to have a good wife. As idolatry prevailed in that whole country, Abraham was fearful of the outcome of a marriage for his son among the neighboring women. So he thought of the good qualities of some of his kindred and decided to send back to his old home for a wife for his son.

He called his most trusted servant and exacted a promise from him that he would be faithful to the trust committed to him. Then he told this servant, whose name was Eliezer, to go over to his old home land and find a wife for his son Isaac. Eliezer no doubt had had some experience with women before, and hesitated to undertake such a ticklish job, calling his master's attention to the embarrassment that would result in case the woman he found would refuse, but Abraham assured him that, if he followed instructions, everything would come out all right.

A Servant Did the Courting

Eliezer, determined that if he had to go hundreds of miles on such a mission, he would go in grand style, so he rigged out ten camels, got a number of presents together and started. Over mountains and plains and deserts he went until he reached the homeland of Abraham. One evening he reached the public well just outside the gates of the city of Nahor. He made the camels lie down and he waited. He knew the young women would come out to the well for water and he proposed to get started on the ticklish job at once.

While he was waiting and secretly asking the Lord to speed him, a beautiful young maiden, with her pitcher on her head, came to the well. At once Eliezer was up and at his task. He ran to the maiden and asked her for a drink of water. She treated him very kindly and offered to water his camels for him. After she had finished drawing water for the camels, he took a heavy golden earring and two gold bracelets and gave them to her, asking her name, where she lived, and if she thought her folks would keep him over night. She assured him that they had plenty of room for both him and his camels, and that he would be perfectly welcome.

A Hospitable Home

While Eliezer was thanking the Lord that he had been prospered thus far, the maiden, whose name was Rebekah, ran home and told the folks all about it. At once all was excitement, for when they saw the rich presents every servant jumped around to get things in order. Rebekah's brother,

Laban, then ran to the well and said, "Come right on in, for I have prepared the house, and room for your camels."

Eliezer went in at once. The camels were unloaded and fed. Water was brought and the traveler's feet washed. Dinner was cooked and set before him. Eliezer said that he would not eat until he had told his errand, and of course they were all very anxious to hear it. Well, that speech of this servant of Abraham was a good one. He had no doubt thought it all out and rehearsed it over and over again.

A Wonderful Speech

To begin with, he said that he was the servant of Abraham, and that this man Abraham was the greatest of the great; that the Lord had given him flocks and herds and silver and gold and men servants and maid servants and camels and asses in great abundance. Then he got down to real business by saying that in his old age a son had been born to Abraham and to this favorite son all these riches would eventually be given.

Then he told how Abraham was not satisfied to have this favorite son marry any of the women in that country and that he had been sent to find a wife for Isaac among their kindred. Eliezer said further that he had told Abraham that the woman might object to accompanying him back, but his master said the Lord would send his angel and prosper his way. Then he told the amazed family all about his experience in coming and what had happened at the well; how the moment he saw Rebekah he felt that she was the woman, and now would they be willing that she should go?

When Laban and Bethuel, Rebekah's brother and father, heard the whole story, they consented. When Eliezer heard their reply he bowed down and worshipped the Lord. Then he brought forth jewels of silver and gold and fine raiment and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave gifts to her brother and her mother. After a night of joy he arose and begged them to send him away at once to his master, but they wanted to keep Rebekah at least ten days. He was so insistent upon starting home at once that they decided to leave it to Rebekah. This seems to be the first time she had had anything to say about it, but she was willing to go, and they started that same day.

The Sharp Eyes of a Woman

It was a long and tiresome journey and no one but a woman can imagine the thoughts of Rebekah as they went toward Canaan. Finally they entered the land near Abraham's possessions. In the meantime Isaac had gone into the field to be alone and incidentally to look across the plain to see if the servant was coming. As he looked toward the horizon, behold the camels were coming. He had already been seen, however, for sharp eyes were on the alert. Rebekah asked the servant who the man was that she saw coming to meet them. When the servant told her it was Isaac, she opened her baggage and took a great veil and covered herself with it.

As Isaac came near, Eliezer went forward to meet him and told him the whole story of his marvelous success. When Isaac and Rebekah met, it was a case of love at first sight. Isaac then took Rebekah into the tent that had been

his mother's and she became his wife. Isaac had been very lonely since the death of his mother but Rebekah comforted him.

Abraham's Death and Burial

Abraham lived to the age of one hundred and seventy-five years. When he passed away they buried him in the Cave of Machpelah, which he had purchased at the death of Sarah, his first wife.

By and by Isaac and Rebekah were blessed with two sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau grew up to be a cunning hunter and many a time brought in fresh venison. Isaac was very fond of this meat and he favored Esau rather than Jacob. While these boys were twins yet Esau was born first and was spoken of as the elder son. It was the custom in those days for the elder son to have what was called the birthright; he was the chief of all the children, and when the father died he got twice as much as any other child.

Sold His Birthright for a Mess of Pottage

Esau, being the eldest, rightly possessed the birthright. While Esau was roaming in the woods looking for game, Jacob was at home taking care of the cattle and sheep. In fact he was a home boy and his mother loved him dearly. One day Esau came home tired and hungry and begged Jacob to cook him some pottage. Jacob told him he would if he would sell him the birthright. Esau, and there are a lot of fellows like him today, reasoned that he was tired and hungry and the birthright would not do him much good anyway,

so he agreed to it. Thus we will see that from this time forward, instead of Esau and Jacob, it became Jacob and Esau.

There came a famine in the land and Isaac moved over to Gerar, the place where Abraham went after Sodom was destroyed. He had thought of emigrating to Egypt, it seems, but the Lord appeared to him, telling him where to go. The Lord also told him that he would bless him and make him great, and through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. While at Gerar Isaac and his family were blessed with such harvests and prospered so abundantly that the people envied them.

Isaac Palmed His Wife off As His Sister

While at Gerar, Isaac got into trouble over his wife. He palmed her off as his sister, something like his father had done years before. Later on Isaac and the people of Gerar got into trouble over the wells that Abraham had dug, and to save trouble he moved down into the valley and dug some wells of his own. But soon the troublers came and he moved again. This was done three times. Had it been Abraham he would have cleaned out the whole company, but perhaps Isaac's plan was best, for they finally left him alone. Isaac built another altar and worshipped the Lord. When Esau was forty he married and his wife was a source of grief to both his father and mother.

CHAPTER VI

An Old Blind Man Deceived

ISAAC is now an old man. His eyes are blinded and he cannot see. One day he called his favorite son and asked him to go into the wilds and hunt some venison, and roast some of it the way he liked it. Isaac added that he would then give him the blessing, that naturally fell to the first born, before he died. Esau started immediately to hunt the deer.

Rebekah loved Jacob most and wanted him to have this blessing. Having heard the conversation between Isaac and Esau, she called Jacob, told him to run quickly to the flocks and get a couple of nice tender lambs, and she would roast them and make savory meat that his father loved. Jacob hesitated, reminding her that his father was not easily fooled; that he would find out that he was being deceived and, instead of blessing would curse him, but his mother had her way and he brought the meat.

An Underhanded Trick

Esau's body was covered with fine hair, so Rebekah took the skin from the lambs and covered Jacob's hands and neck with it. She also had Jacob put on one of Esau's hunting coats and take the meat to his father. In order to make the deception complete Jacob had to tell more than one bare-faced lie. He was all but discovered, but

finally he received the blessing and had just gotten out of the room when Esau came in.

The scene that followed in that household was terrible. The old blind father trembled with rage when he found the deception. Esau was heartbroken and cried out with a great and bitter cry, saying, "Bless me, even me also, O, my father." When Isaac told him how his brother had received the blessing, Esau lifted up his voice and wept. The writer of the Hebrew letter uses this story as an illustration to show that there are cases when repentance, even with tears, is too late. It is interesting to note how the prediction Isaac made concerning Esau and his descendants has been fulfilled to the letter.

A Boy Leaving Home

This underhanded trick aroused all the temper Esau possessed and he swore vengeance upon his brother. Rebekah heard it and she knew Esau well enough to know that Jacob would not be safe in that community another day. She appeased the anger of Isaac by complaining again about Esau's heathen wives and getting him to agree to let Jacob leave at once and go over to Haran that he might find a wife there. Isaac then called Jacob and told him to go to the country of his mother's brother and there find a wife among their kindred, blessing him again as he started.

That piece of foolishness on the part of Jacob and his mother cost a fearful price. Little did Rebekah think when she planned the deception that she was driving her loved son from her presence forever, but such was the case. When she bade him goodby that day it was for the last time

on earth. She never saw him again. When he started out from the old home there was a lump in his throat that almost choked him. Later on he had to stop for the night out on the hills alone, for the gates of the city closed at sunset. But he took a stone for a pillow and tried to sleep. No doubt the stone was moistened by his tears as he looked up at the stars.

A Wonderful Dream

Finally he fell asleep, and my! what a dream! He saw a great stairway that reached into heaven. He saw angels going up and coming down. At the top of the ladder stood the Lord promising that He would never leave him. That dream must have been the inspiration of his long life. In the gospel of John, in the New Testament, it is intimated by Jesus that this dream was a type of Himself. When Jacob awoke he was trembling like a leaf. He said, "Surely God is in this place and I knew it not. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." As the Lord had promised to bless him and give him the very ground upon which he was sleeping, and through him bless all the families of earth, Jacob marked the place with a stone and made a vow which he always kept.

Over the mountains, across the plains and deserts this wanderer trudged. By and by he came to the land of the people of the east. Weary and footsore he came to a well where three flocks of sheep were huddling. He found the shepherds and asked them where they lived and they told him, in Haran. He asked them if they knew a man by the name of Laban, and they said they did.

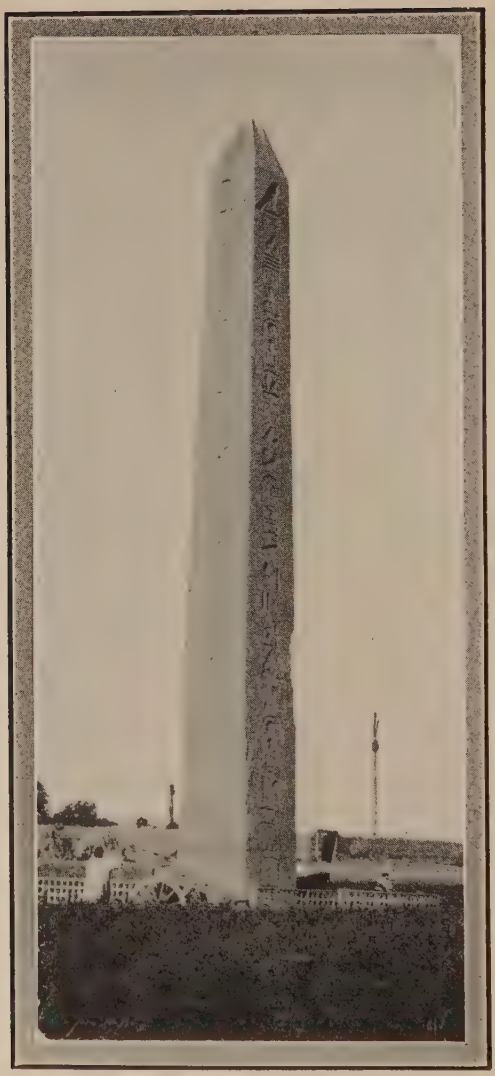


Photo by Curtis M. Glick.

SAID TO BE THE OLDEST OBELISK IN EGYPT.
ON THE BORDERLINE OF THE LAND OF GOSHEN.

He asked about his uncle's health and they told him that he was well. Then they told him that Rachel, the daughter of Laban, took care of his sheep and that she would soon be coming to the well to water her flock. While they were yet talking, Rachel came up. The moment Jacob saw Rachel he forgot all about his tired limbs and sore feet. He ran around and rolled the stone away from the well, watered the sheep for her, and ended up by giving her a kiss and telling her that he was her aunt Rebekah's son. He was so overjoyed and happy that he cried like a child.

Love at First Sight

As soon as Rachel could get away from Jacob she ran to her father and told him about it. As soon as Laban heard it he ran out and got hold of Jacob, embracing and kissing him, and brought him into the house. What a night that must have been! It is hardly likely that any of the folks slept a wink. Of course Uncle Laban must hear the whole history of Rebekah's life in detail. Whether Jacob said a word about why he left home is not recorded. But anyway they visited a whole month.

The moment Jacob saw Rachel he fell hopelessly in love with her. He worked along for his uncle as one of the family for awhile. One day the question of wages was mentioned and Jacob proposed that he work seven years for Rachel. Wasn't that a snap, though? He could be there with his sweetheart all the time, and together they could take care of the sheep. Leah, Rachel's older sister was at home, but she was tender eyed and Jacob didn't like her very well. How quickly

those seven years passed by! The time seemed but a few days to Jacob, so great was his love for Rachel.

A Young Deceiver Deceived

The time of the wedding drew nigh. Laban made a great feast and the whole community was invited. According to the custom the bride wore a long veil that covered her entire body so the bridegroom did not see his bride until the next day after the ceremony. Imagine Jacob's chagrin the next morning when he found that his old uncle had deceived him, and that he had married the tender eyed sister of the girl he loved. No wonder he was mad. His chickens were coming home to roost. It is quite likely that he thought of his own deception and felt that this was a sort of punishment sent upon him. The matter was patched up, however, by an agreement that he should work another seven years for the girl he loved. When the time expired, he and Rachel were married.

For awhile Jacob worked for his father-in-law for wages. Then he went into partnership with him. Jacob was a natural born stockraiser and schemer as well, and it was not long until he had the finest and fattest of all the cattle. But he continually longed for the old home, and proposed that he take his flocks and herds and go back to Canaan. The Lord also appeared to Jacob and told him to return to the land of his fathers.

CHAPTER VII

Leaving Between Two Days

IN his journey back to the old home, Jacob seems to have gotten started on the wrong foot. First, he secretly left the country. Laban, his father-in-law, was shearing sheep at the time and did not know that Jacob had gone until the third day. Of course the old gentleman was mad as an aroused hornet. He gathered his forces, no doubt quite a little army, and started in pursuit. There was blood in the old Syrian's eye, and he was desperate. But the Lord had promised Jacob that He would care for him and His promises have never failed. The record says, "And God came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream by night and said to him, 'Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.'"

Rachel Stole Her Father's Gods

On the seventh day when Laban overtook Jacob his anger was gone and he was a perfect gentleman. He actually told Jacob that had he known he was going he might have had a regular jubilee and had music and refreshments. But said he, "You didn't allow me to kiss my daughters good-by, and have stolen my gods in the bargain." Now Rachel, Jacob's wife, had stolen her father's images and Jacob did not know it. This statement so surprised Jacob that he told his father-in-law to search the camp and if he found the images, to kill the one who stole them. Laban searched

for them but Rachel had hidden them so securely that he never found them. Some say a woman cannot keep a secret, but it was many years before Jacob found out that his wife had stolen the old man's gods.

Patched Up Their Differences

When Laban failed to find the images, then Jacob got hot. He had some reason for being indignant. His brothers-in-law had falsely accused him of stealing before and quite likely this tongue lashing was to them as well as Laban. Jacob told the old gentleman how mean he had been, how he had deceived him and lowered his wages ten times and that if God had not intervened and took care of him Laban would have sent him away alone, without a crust of bread.

The storm was soon over, however, and the two men got together and made an agreement that was satisfactory to both. They gathered stones and set them up for a witness, offered sacrifice, ate together and stayed all night. Early the next morning Laban kissed them all goodby, blessed them, and they parted with the Christian Endeavor benediction.

Esau Met Jacob With an Army

As Jacob went on his way he got to thinking of the old days and how twenty years before he had to leave home. As he thought of the parting with Esau the whole thing came back like a shock. Would Esau receive him as a brother, or would he still hold the old grudge? As he went on some angels met him. Jacob called them the Lord's host or army and no doubt they were sent to help

and protect him. As he came near the home country he sent messengers to tell Esau that he was now rich and great and was coming back to the old home to live in peace and harmony. To his unbounded astonishment the messengers returned with the startling news that Esau was coming to meet him with an army of four hundred men.

The Fright of Jacob's Life

Now Jacob was thoroughly frightened. Immediately all was excitement in the camp. The company was divided and some of the men went with one part and some with the other. Jacob's instructions were that if one company was smitten the other should flee with all possible speed. Then Jacob prayed as he never had prayed before. In the evening he called his herdsmen and selected a drove of five hundred and eighty head of camels, cattle, asses, and sheep. These he divided into several small droves. He ordered that they go on across the river and be ready to go on the following morning. There was to be a little space between each drove and the next, and when they met Esau with his army, they were to say to him, "We are Jacob's servants and here is a little present for my lord Esau. Jacob is coming a little way behind."

Jacob Wrestling With an Angel

That night Jacob was so worried that he couldn't sleep. His family consisted of his two wives, two women servants, and eleven sons. He got them all up and to a place of safety. Then he went out alone and lived over again the days

and years agone. He had come to think he was great, but now realized his own weakness and unworthiness. How we wish there was a little more in the record here. Jacob was no coward, for when he turned and saw a stranger by his side he tackled him. Then occurred the greatest wrestling match of all history. The stranger was an angel and Jacob gave him a mighty tussle. On they struggled, hour after hour, until the day began to break. Finally the angel touched Jacob's thigh and it flew out of joint. Still the man held on and would not let the angel go until he received a blessing from him. Jacob actually threw himself upon the mercy of God and held on until his weakness had become his strength.

The new day found Jacob a new man. His old, proud feeling was gone and he was now a very humble man. His name, Jacob, which means, "The Supplanter," was changed to Israel, which means, "A Prince of God." Here is the first use of the word Israel from which we get the word Israelite later on. No wonder Jacob called the place, "The Face of God." The great struggle was now over and as Jacob crossed the river that morning the old life was buried forever.

The Brothers Meet as Friends

As he reached the family he looked up and saw Esau and his army in the distance. Now he separated his family, placing the handmaids and their children first, Leah and her children next, and his beloved Rachel and Joseph last. Then he went out ahead of them alone and as he came near his brother he bowed himself seven times. When his brother saw that he was in real earnest and

wished to meet him in peace, Esau ran up to him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him and wept. The old feud was buried forever.

Esau Accepts Jacob's Gifts

When Esau saw the women and children he asked who they were. Jacob told him they were his family, and they came up courteously and were introduced. Esau then asked the meaning of all those droves, and Jacob told him they were only a little present for him. When Esau said that he had plenty and that Jacob should keep them for himself, the newly found brother insisted and Esau accepted the gift graciously. Esau was wholehearted in his welcome and offered to help his brother along the way, but Jacob assured him that his flocks with their little ones would have to go slowly and that he would get along all right alone. Finally Esau went back to his home, no doubt rejoicing that they had buried the hatchet for all time.

Jacob went leisurely on until he came to a place which he called Succoth and here he built a house to live in, and shelter for his cattle. Later he went on to Shechem where he purchased a piece of land and dug a well and made this place his home.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

THE TOMB OF RACHEL AS IT APPEARS TODAY.

CHAPTER VIII

Angels of Life and Death

WHILE at Shechem the Lord appeared to Jacob after which he gathered all the idols and objects of worship the family had and hid them under an oak. He then moved farther on and stopped at Bethel where he had dreamed of the stairway to heaven, more than twenty years before. Here he built another altar and worshipped God. From Bethel he moved again toward Bethlehem, and while on the way Benjamin was born. While the angel of life left the little babe, the angel of death also came, taking away the babe's mother, Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel. Her body was tenderly buried and Jacob marked the spot with a monument that stood for centuries, in fact is standing today.

Soon Jacob went on until he came to Hebron, the old home that he left many years before. While his mother, Rebekah, had long since died, Isaac was still alive but very old and feeble. He died soon and Jacob and Esau buried his body in the Cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah were buried. These brothers were now both rich and had such vast herds of cattle and sheep that there was not enough pasturage for all, so they separated. Esau took all his flocks and herds and family and went eastward to the land of Edom and made his home there.

Altogether Jacob had twelve sons. Joseph was his favorite, both because he was sensible and

obedient, and was the son of Rachel the woman he loved so dearly. Benjamin, Joseph's full brother, was yet small. Because of his love for Joseph, his father made him a most beautiful coat. His older brothers all envied him and hated him as well. This last gift aroused their anger more than ever.

A Young Man's Wonderful Dreams

Joseph dreamed two dreams that impressed him very much. In one of the dreams he thought they were all in the harvest field binding grain and that all the sheaves bound by his brothers came and bowed down to his sheaf. In the other dream the sun and moon and eleven stars made obeisance to him. When he told these dreams, his brothers thought he insinuated that they, with their father and mother, would bow to him. This made them all mad. When Joseph told the dreams to his father he too was displeased, and while he rebuked the dreamer he did not forget the dreams.

In the course of time Joseph's brothers had taken their flocks up toward Shechem, which was perhaps fifty miles from home. Not hearing from them for some time, Jacob decided to send Joseph to find them and see how they were coming on. When the lad got into a strange country he got lost and hardly knew his own name. Some man found him wandering around and set him right, sending him to Dothan where the shepherds had gone.

Joseph Sold Into Egypt

When his brothers saw him coming their anger knew no bounds. Some of them wanted to kill him on the spot. Reuben objected to this and suggested that they put him into a deep pit without harming him. He intended to rescue him later and send him back home. His counsel finally prevailed and as soon as he came up they tore his coat of many colors from him and threw him into the pit. Reuben had to look after his flock and while he was absent a caravan, bound for Egypt, came along. The strangers proved to be distant relatives. They were descendants of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, who was driven from the home of Abraham, as was noted in a former chapter. Judah, another of the brothers, suggested that they sell Joseph to these Ishmaelites. It was done and they received twenty pieces of silver for him.

It was a heart-rending scene when the strangers took Joseph, who was but a mere boy, away by force. In all his begging and pleading not one of his brothers was moved to help him. As long as they lived, however, they never forgot the scene of his agony or the look of fright upon his face. Now the problem of how to tell their old father what had become of Joseph presented itself. In the meantime Reuben, the brother who wanted to save him, returned to the pit to rescue him and found that he was gone. He was heart-broken and cried out, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?"

An Old Man's Grief

The heartless brothers finally decided to take the coat of many colors and dip it in blood and return it to their father. This they did, after having all agreed to stand together in a lie to deceive their old father. They took the bloody coat to their father and told him they had found it upon the hills and did not know whether it was Joseph's coat or not.

Such a scene as followed they had never witnessed before. Jacob was now a lonely old man. He had looked every day for the return of the son he loved and now the older sons had come home without him. The moment he saw the coat he knew it and said, "This is my boy's coat. An evil beast has killed him." He rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and mourned for many days. All his children tried every way to comfort him but he refused to be comforted. Every one who saw him knew that he was broken-hearted, for he wept most of the time. He had deceived his old blind father and now his own sons had deceived him.

Joseph in an Egyptian Prison

These Ishmaelites took Joseph into Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, who was an officer under King Pharaoh. As a slave in Potiphar's home, Joseph soon won the respect of all and was made the chief of all the servants. He soon became a fine looking young man and Potiphar's wife fell in love with him. Through all this love affair Joseph acted a perfect gentleman and tried his best to get the woman to see her error. When he positively refused to be trapped by the woman,

she turned against him, falsely accused him, and had him sent to the king's prison. But a man as good and pure as Joseph could not be kept down and it was not long until he was the real keeper of the prison.

The Best People Have Bitter Trials

Here is the character, which of all others found in the Old Testament, is nearest perfection. If Joseph ever did wrong the fact is not recorded. No doubt he often thought of his old home and longed to be by his father's side once more, while he was languishing in the Egyptian prison. Although a good man, he was not exempt from great and bitter trials. In fact, it was largely these trials that made him such a wonderful man in after years. But here he was falsely accused, misunderstood and misrepresented everywhere. He never forgot God and was never forgotten of Him. His faith in the final outcome of the right was unshakable. He deserved to be trusted and always found people who were willing to trust him. Even Potiphar no doubt felt that he was not to blame and was falsely accused. Someone has suggested that not one in a thousand of those who have admired and wept over this pathetic and glorious narrative, would ever have so much as read it, had it been merely the history of unbroken prosperity.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

PALESTINE SHEPHERDS AS ONE SEES THEM TODAY.

CHAPTER IX

Prison Dreams That Came True

IT is a great thing for a young man when his everyday life shows that he deserves to be trusted. Joseph was just such a young man. Wherever he was, he tried to do his duty and be helpful to all. He must have assisted the keeper of the prison very much for soon he won his complete confidence and was entrusted with the care of all the prisoners.

One day two grand people came as prisoners. One of them was the chief of all the bakers. He was the boss of the largest kitchen in the world. The other was the man who carried the wine to the king, the king's cupbearer. One morning these two men were both down-hearted. As Joseph was always speaking a word of cheer, he asked what was troubling them. They said they had dreams that troubled them. At once Joseph was interested and asked what they had dreamed.

The cupbearer spoke first, saying that he seemed to see a vine upon which were three bunches of grapes, and that he made wine as he used to do and took it to the king. Joseph told him that the three bunches of grapes signified three days and at the end of this time he would be restored to his place. Joseph also charged him to remember him and say a good word for him as he had been falsely accused and imprisoned. The baker then told his dream, which was that he had three baskets full of pastry for the king and the

birds came and ate the food while the basket was still upon his head. Joseph had to tell him that the three baskets signified three days and at the end of that time he would be hung. It so happened that on the third day from that time the king had a birthday and made a feast for all his servants. On that day the cupbearer was restored and the baker hanged as Joseph had said.

A King in Trouble

Like many people today, the cupbearer forgot all about the man who helped him. Two long years went by and Joseph was still in prison, but he never lost faith in God. He went on doing his work as best he could. Wouldn't it be interesting to know just what he did during those two years? One night Pharaoh dreamed two dreams that troubled him greatly. The first dream was soon after the king went to sleep. He seemed to see seven fat cows come up from the river Nile. They were grazing in the meadow when seven others, poor and lean, came up out of the river and devoured the seven fat ones. No wonder this dream awoke the king.

Pharaoh soon went back to sleep, however, and dreamed that he saw a great big corn stalk with seven large ears of corn on it. Then seven thin ears came and were blasted by the east wind which blowed continually. Finally the thin ears devoured the fat ones. When the king awoke after this dream, he could not go to sleep again. In the morning he was so troubled about these dreams that he called in the wise men. This, of course, created not a little excitement in the palace and soon became the talk of the entire house-

hold. When the cupbearer carried the wine to the king he acknowledged his own forgetfulness and told Pharaoh the whole story of his experience in prison two years before. He also told about the young Hebrew interpreting his dream, as well as that of the chief cook, and emphasized the fact that prediction of this man came true in both cases. At once Pharaoh sent for Joseph.

Joseph Called Before the Egyptian Monarch

Imagine, if you can, how Joseph's heart fluttered when the message came for him to go to the king's palace. He quickly shaved and cleaned up, and no doubt the servants, who were by this time great friends of the young man, brought him some good clothes and helped him get ready. When he came into the palace Pharaoh told his dreams and that none of his wise men could tell what they meant. He mentioned, no doubt, how he came to hear about him and that he could interpret dreams. Joseph told him that all the power he had was from God. Pharaoh told the dreams and Joseph assured him that through these dreams God was showing him what He was about to do. He said the dreams were one—that the seven cattle and the seven ears meant the same thing, that for seven years there would be an abundance of everything and then would come seven years of famine.

Joseph then suggested that Pharaoh find some good man and set him over all the land of Egypt, that there be appointed officers to buy up one-fifth of all the grain raised and thus be ready for the seven years' famine. Joseph impressed the fact

that this was to be a terrible famine and would be universal.

From Prison to the Throne in a Day

Now came the greatest surprise of Joseph's life. Pharaoh was very much impressed with the wisdom of this young man, and after conferring with those about him said, "Forasmuch as God hath showed you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou." My! what a change! From the dungeon to the throne in a single day! Only thirty years old but ruler of one of the greatest empires of the world! Son of a shepherd, dreamer, slave, prisoner, king! If any one does not believe in God, let him read the story of Joseph. If any one thinks God forgets His people, let him read the story of Joseph. If any one thinks that it does not pay to do right under all circumstances, let him read the story of Joseph.

Joseph went back to prison no more. He is now robed in fine linen with a chain of gold about his neck and a signet ring upon his finger. He now goes through the streets riding in the royal chariot and runners going before, shouting, "Bow the knee." Now he becomes the son-in-law of the most powerful priest in the kingdom.

The Busiest Man in Egypt

As the seven years of plenty were going by, Joseph was everywhere. He built great storehouses and laid up grain in such large quantities

that it was almost impossible to keep track of the amount. In the cities, in the fields, nearly everywhere, were storehouses. When Joseph's first son was born he named him Menassah, which means, "forgetting," for God had helped him to forget the bitter past. The second son he called Ephraim, which means, "double," for the Lord had given him double that he had ever dreamed could possibly be his.

About one hundred and seventy-five miles south of Cairo, Egypt, is a series of thirty-nine rock-cut tombs in which some of the leading families of the old days were buried. On the walls of these tombs are paintings and carvings illustrating the chief events of the lives of people buried there. On the walls of the tomb of the local governor of ancient times are represented thirty-seven figures of a tribe of people who were unmistakably the Hebrews. On the monuments in different parts of the country are representations of men bringing corn into granaries. In a certain tomb is a man represented whose business it was to take account of the number of bushels which others under him are measuring and the inscription reads, "The registrar of bushels."

Bible Statements Confirmed by Inscriptions

The granaries of Egypt are also represented on the monuments. In one of the tombs there is a painting representing a great storehouse with the door opened and men ready to measure out the grain, a great heap of which is at the door. On at least one of the tombs a great famine of several years' duration is mentioned and the inscription of the governor reminds one of Joseph. It

is as follows, "He injured no little child; he oppressed no widow; he detained for his own purpose no fisherman; took from his work no shepherd; no overseer's men were taken. There was no beggar in his days; no one starved in his time. When the years of famine came he ploughed all the lands of the district, producing abundant food; he treated the widow as a woman with a husband to protect her."

Joseph Changes Land Ownership

Another interesting fact is certain. Joseph's power was so great that he changed the whole land ownership system of Egypt. While in that country some years ago, the writer heard from missionaries and others very many interesting traditions of Joseph that have come down to the present time. Well, the famine came as had been predicted and the storehouses were opened to all. Countries round about Egypt were affected. Canaan was without food and Joseph's own family there were on the verge of starvation.

CHAPTER X

A Famine In Canaan

IN the last chapter we followed the fortunes of Joseph and left him ruler over the greatest empire of his time. Now we must go back to Canaan where Jacob and his family still lived. Nearly twenty years had passed since Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites. The great famine was hard on the people of Canaan. Food became so scarce that people were suffering from hunger. The ten sons of Jacob are in want and each looked to the other to suggest some way to save them. Old father Jacob heard in some way that there was plenty of corn in Egypt and asked his sons to go at once and buy enough to keep them from starving.

The ten elder sons finally reached Egypt and the moment Joseph saw them he knew them. He spoke to them roughly and called them spies. He sent them to prison for three days, thus giving them a hint of the treatment they had given him twenty years before. Perhaps he just wanted to test them to see if they were the same hard-hearted shepherds as in the days of old. They told him that they were all sons of one man and that they had a younger brother at home. Joseph finally told them that they could leave one of their number in prison as a hostage while they went back with some food so the family would not starve. He then charged them that they should bring their younger brother with them that he might see him.

A Tender-Hearted King

Joseph spoke to his brethren through an interpreter and they never dreamed that he could understand their own conversation. He therefore had an opportunity to hear them talk, and found out, to his astonishment, that they believed their misfortune was sent upon them because of the way they had treated him years before. If you remember, it was Reuben who suggested that they put Joseph into a pit, intending to go later and rescue him and send him back to his father. Now Reuben says, "I told you so." When Joseph heard their conversation he went out and wept. Then he went back and bound Simeon, the eldest, and sent the others home, having their money put back into the sacks with their corn. He told them that if they came back without their younger brother he would not see them.

Benjamin Taken to Egypt

When they reached home they had a great story to tell. As they were relating their experiences to their old father, the sacks were being opened and lo! the money they had taken with which to buy corn was all there. This made them all afraid. Soon, however, their food was almost gone and they had a time getting their father to let Benjamin go to Egypt with them. At first he positively refused, reminding them that Simeon was already in an Egyptian prison, that Joseph was dead, and that if anything should happen to Benjamin it would bring his gray hair in sorrow to the grave. The case grew desperate and Jacob still refused to part with his baby boy. Finally, after the sons refused to go without Benjamin,

and Judah had offered to become surety for him, Jacob gave in and allowed him to go. This time they took some presents and double money and on reaching Egypt they at once told Joseph that through some mistake the money had been placed in their sacks when they were there before.

Invited His Brothers to a Feast

When Joseph saw Benjamin he could hardly contain himself for, as you remember, he was his own full brother. He made a great feast for them and had it prepared to serve in his own dining room. He also had the plates arranged in the order of their ages. He then asked them many questions about their father but every time he looked at Benjamin he could hardly keep the tears back, and did have to leave the room a time or two to weep.

After the feast Joseph conjured up a plan to keep his brother Benjamin in Egypt. He had their sacks all filled and the money put back as before, but in Benjamin's sack he had his own silver cup placed, after which he sent them away. They had hardly gotten out of the city when some officers overtook them and accused them of stealing. Of course they were horrified and vehement in their denial and agreed that the one in whose sack the missing article was found should die and the others would become slaves. Beginning at the eldest they came down to Benjamin's sack and to their unbounded astonishment the missing cup was there.

Judah's Plea for Benjamin

At this all rent their garments and showed signs of deepest distress, and returned to the palace. Now came a wonderful scene. Judah, who had become surety for Benjamin and through whose influence Jacob had given up for him to go, became the spokesman. The plea he made has been pronounced the most wonderful piece of natural oratory ever spoken or written. He pictured the old father going down to the grave in sorrow, told how he had mourned for twenty years for the lad that was torn to pieces by the wild beast, and that now his only source of comfort was this son of his old age that he loved so dearly. He closed his plea by offering himself as a slave if Benjamin might be allowed to go back home to his father.

Joseph Made Himself Known to His Brethren

This touching plea was too much for Joseph. He could stand it no longer. He ordered every Egyptian out of the room and wept so loud that he was heard for a block. No doubt his brothers were all amazed at the turn things had taken but they were in entire ignorance. When Joseph said, "Come near, I am your own brother, Joseph. Doth my father still live?" they were all dumfounded and frightened nearly to death. When they did not come to him he said, "Come near to me, I pray you. I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt."

By this time the truth had begun to dawn upon them and what a happy time they had! Joseph now talked kindly to them and told them not to be grieved, that God had used him to save them. He told them that there would yet be five years of

famine and that they should go back home as quickly as possible and get their father and all their flocks and herds and servants and come at once to Egypt to live; that he would set apart the land of Goshen as a home for them. How he did fondle and kiss Benjamin and they all had a good old fashioned visit in the palace of the king.

The Royal Chariots of Egypt

One day, a little later on, old father Jacob was sitting in the door of his home looking toward Egypt. In fact the whole household was on the lookout, for it was time for the sons to return, and no doubt the pangs of hunger were felt. One of the boys came running breathlessly, "Oh, grandfather, they are coming." Sure enough a cloud of dust was now plainly seen. What a scene took place when they reached home with twenty mules laden with presents and good things from Egypt.

When the sons told their father the good news he said it could not be possible. Then they showed him the beautiful garments and rich robes and other presents that had been bestowed upon Benjamin, and still he could not believe. Finally a couple of them must have gotten hold of their father and almost carried him out to see the royal chariots Joseph had sent to bring them to Egypt. It was too much. The old man began to see it all, for the record says that when he saw these chariots his spirit revived and he said: "It is enough. Joseph, my son, is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

THE LITTLE SPHINX AT MEMPHIS.

CHAPTER XI

Jacob Moving to Egypt

DID you ever move by wagon to a far distant state? Then you can imagine some of the excitement in Jacob's household as they quickly made preparation to move to Egypt. There were sixty-six of Jacob's immediate family (not counting Joseph and his sons) and their great flocks and herds. Including all the shepherds and servants there must have been a large company. Wouldn't that journey be a genuine picnic for the children?

Although Jacob was now old and feeble, his faith in God was great and before leaving the borderland he turned aside at Beersheba and offered sacrifices. God spoke to him in visions at night and told him not to hesitate but to go on to Egypt; that He would go with him and make of him a great and mighty nation and in the course of time his descendants would come back to Canaan. The Lord also told him that Joseph would be kind to him and be at his bedside when he died.

Joseph Meeting His Aged Father

What a long train of wagons and footmen it was and how it created great excitement along the way as this caravan moved Egyptward! Judah was sent on ahead to inform Joseph that they were coming. When Joseph found that they were near he left his grain offices in the hands of others, had his chariot made ready and went out to meet his old father, and what a happy meeting it was! How

the old patriarch put his arms around Joseph's neck and kissed him as he had done the day he started out to hunt his brothers twenty years before. No wonder that after they had embraced each other for a long time the old father said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

Jacob Presented to the King of Egypt

A rather delicate question arose at once, but Joseph was equal to the occasion. The Egyptians looked upon a shepherd as an abomination. Joseph, therefore, told his father and brothers how to act and what to say when they were presented to Pharaoh. Then Joseph went in to Pharaoh and told him that his father and brethren had come and presented five of them who were with him. When the king asked them about their occupation they frankly told him the whole story, that they were shepherds and were driven to Egypt on account of the famine. The king treated them so kindly that Joseph went out and got his father and presented him. Pharaoh was favorably impressed with Jacob and asked how old he was, to which Jacob replied, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." As Jacob went out from the king's presence he pronounced a blessing upon him.

The Home Provided

At the command of Pharaoh, Joseph gave his father and brothers the land of Goshen, then called

Rameses, and nourished them, giving them food during the years of famine. As the months went by the famine increased and the people of Egypt brought their money and exchanged it for food. When it was all gone they brought their cattle and stock, and when this was all gone they sold their land to Pharaoh for food and became his servants, and thus the whole system of land ownership was changed. The priests only were allowed to hold their lands, for they lived upon the bounties of the king. Then Joseph rented the land to the people, furnishing them seed to sow and plant, and they were to pay Pharaoh one-fifth of what they raised. Quite different these days, for the most favored renter has to pay more than double that amount.

Seventeen years went by after Jacob and his family moved to Egypt. The old patriarch was now one hundred and forty-seven years old. He saw that the end was near and called Joseph and had a heart-to-heart talk with him. He told Joseph that he did not want to be buried in Egypt, that he wanted his body taken back to the land of his fathers, and Joseph promised that it would be done. A little later word was brought to Joseph that his father was very sick. Taking his two sons with him he hastened to the bedside. The old hero's mind was wandering back through the years and he was recounting the events of his life.

Jacob's Death and Funeral

Although almost blind he could see just a little and when he opened his eyes he saw two young men standing by his bedside and asked Joseph who they were. When Joseph told his father that they were his sons, Jacob asked that they come near so

he could bless them. An impressive scene it was when Joseph took Ephraim's hand in his right and Menassah's hand in his left and led them to his bedside. The dying man placed one of his hands on each boy's head and blessed them. Then the whole family was called in and the dying father spoke a few significant words to each of his sons, blessing each one, then gave orders as to his funeral and passed peacefully away.

The world never saw such a funeral procession as when Jacob's body was laid to rest. First, the best physicians of Egypt embalmed the body and it was kept in state until seventy days had passed. Then arrangements were completed and a mighty company made up of chariots and horsemen, including the retinue of the palace as well as a great host of the kindred, and they started on the long journey to Canaan. If it was in keeping with Egypt's customs, and it no doubt was, the hearse containing the mummy of the deceased was drawn by four oxen and seven men, all under the direction of a superintendent who had charge of the funeral march. Ahead of the hearse went a great host of servants carrying tables with fruits and ointments, a vacant chair and numerous other things. Behind the hearse came the male members of the deceased's family.

Joseph Returned Good for Evil

On reaching the place called the threshing floor of Atad, which was not far from the Cave of Machpelah, the company stopped and spent seven days in mourning, after which the body was laid in the tomb. On returning to Egypt the brethren of Joseph became alarmed, fearing that as their father

was dead Joseph would punish them, and they sent a messenger to him asking that he forgive their terrible sin of other days. They impressed this with a statement that this was their father's request, or rather command, before he died. When Joseph saw their fears he wept and spoke kindly to them, telling them that they need have no fear.

At the age of one hundred and ten years Joseph died. Before passing away he took an oath of the children of Israel that they should carry his bones back to Canaan with them when they left Egypt. When he died his body was embalmed and placed in a coffin in which it remained until the children went up from Egypt. They carried the embalmed body with them to Canaan and finally buried it at the old home near Jacob's well, where he played when he was a boy.

Confirmation of Bible History

Let us pause in our journey long enough to call to mind a few things about this country called Goshen. Until a few years ago the Egyptologist refused to believe this story because he said the name Goshen is not found upon the monuments of Egypt. But in 1885 a large statue of Rameses II, the supposed oppressor of the Hebrews, was found in this part of the country.

On this statue it is stated that the name of this country was called Kesem, which the Hebrews called Goshen. Thus the Egyptian home of the children of Israel is made certain. It is the borderland between Egypt and Arabia. It is protected by British rule and irrigated and tilled today. Here, too, are the ruins of the city of Pithom, the walls of which are twenty-four feet in thickness. In

these ruins are some of the great storehouses of Joseph. The bricks in the walls of this city are stamped with the name of Rameses II. These bricks bear silent testimony to the story of the oppression of the Israelites while in Egypt.

Photograph by Dr. Powell

THE AUTHOR ON A CAMEL

CHAPTER XII

Oppression of the Hebrews

ALL the Bible gives of the history of the Israelites from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses is but a few verses in the first chapter of Exodus. The substance of these words is that the Hebrews increased in numbers rapidly and became so mighty and powerful that the king feared them. The new families of Pharaohs cared nothing for them and treated them wrongfully. They were made to toil on public works, build cities, dig canals, and had placed over them cruel taskmasters who inflicted them with heavy burdens. Josephus also states that they worked on the pyramids. But the more these people were afflicted the faster they multiplied.

Some of the Egyptian scribes, who pretended to foretell the future, predicted that a male child would be born among them, who, if reared, would bring the Egyptians low and raise the Israelites high, and that his name would be remembered throughout all ages. The king of Egypt was now thoroughly alarmed and ordered all the male children among the Hebrews killed at birth. He called the midwives and gave them such orders, but they refused to obey him. When he found this out he took these women to task about it, but they were smart enough to get out of it all right. God was with the Hebrews and helped them, and they grew in numbers more rapidly than ever before.

The Birth of Moses

Once more the king charged them that every male child be thrown into the river. Josephus

adds that the king enjoined that if any of the Hebrew parents disobeyed and tried to hide their male children, that they and their families should be destroyed. In the light of this statement we can see the significance of the statement in the eleventh chapter of Hebrew, viz.: "By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents because they saw that he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

Amram and Jochebed, a young couple of the tribe of Levi, were married and their first born was a girl whom they named Miriam. When she was about twelve, a son was born and they gave him the name of Aaron. When this child was about three years old another son was born and this child was destined to be the greatest man of all ages, excepting, of course, the Man of Galilee. This child was so fair to look upon that his mother defied the king and hid him three months.

A Wonderful Plan

Now came one of the most skillful plans ever conceived to save the life of a little child. No doubt the father had to work under the lash all day long, so almost the whole scheme was that of the mother. She had noticed that Pharaoh's daughter made regular visits to a certain place at the river Nile, and that she came about the same hour each day. First she wove a little basket of bullrushes and daubed it with slime and pitch so it would not leak. Then she put her baby to sleep, tenderly laid him in the basket and took it down to the river, placing it among the flags growing there.

She then instructed her fifteen-year-old daughter how to proceed, and quietly disappeared.

Pharaoh's Daughter Found the Child

The king's daughter came down as usual, and the first thing she saw was that little basket, and sent her maid to get it. As she uncovered the basket the little child awoke and began to cry. Someone has said that upon the cry of that child depended the destiny of a nation. It would perhaps be better to say that on that mother's faith hung the destiny of a nation. Just then Miriam appeared and seeing that the princess was moved and had compassion on the little child, she courteously asked if she should go and call a nurse from among the Hebrew women to care for the child. When the royal lady told her to go, her feet barely touched the ground until she reached her mother. In a few moments Jochebed calmly approached and Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me and I will pay thee wages."

Wasn't that a skillfully laid plan, and didn't it work to an exact nicety? Not a hitch anywhere. Wasn't that a happy father who came from his toil that evening? We might wish that we had a few more of the details here, but it is no doubt better as it is. Behind this whole plan, as well as the recording of it, was God. No one but the Divine Being would have known just what to say and just what to leave out to make this story so that people of all ages could not help believing it. How these parents were told to hide the child is not recorded, but we are told that it was done by faith, and that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Trampled Upon the Crown

The king's daughter named the child Moses. This name in its Egyptian form is found on the monuments of Egypt today. About his early life the Bible is silent. There is a striking story about him by the Jewish historian. He states that when Moses was a little boy, Pharaoh's daughter placed him in the arms of the king stating that, as she had no child of her own, she had adopted him. The king put his arms around the child and in a pleasant way placed a diadem upon his head. The child, however, threw the crown down and trod upon it with his feet. In the same room at the same time was the sacred scribe who had foretold about the child which would become a curse to the Egyptians. The moment this scribe saw Moses he jumped at him saying that he was the very one of whom he had warned the king. This sacred scribe would have killed Moses on the spot, but the king's daughter rescued him.

Influence of a Mother's Teaching

In the New Testament we are told that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds. How long his mother taught him is not recorded, but he was with her long enough to learn the things of God. In his after life we see the good influences that he received from his mother. A mother's training, at the time impressions are made, lasts forever. Someone has said that when old enough he was probably sent to be educated in the college near the Temple of the Sun, which has been called the Oxford of ancient Egypt. Here he would be taught to read the mysterious heiroglyphics, and in-

structed in mathematics, astronomy and chemistry, in all of which the Egyptians were leaders. He must have been instructed in music also, for in after years he not only sang triumphal songs of victory, but he composed songs which "embalmed the history of God's dealings with his people."

A Wonderful Character

Moses must have had wonderful military training, for in after years, as we shall see, he took an unorganized mob of millions and turned them into a most thoroughly organized company of people. Whatever may have been his successes while near the throne, he never forgot his own people. When about forty years of age he went out among his brethren one day and saw one of the cruel Egyptians smiting one of his own race, and it only took a moment for him to lay the man low. The next day he went back and saw a couple of his own brethren striving and told the man who was in the wrong to let up on it, when the fellow said, "Who made thee a prince and judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou did the Egyptian yesterday?"

Then Moses was afraid, for he knew that his own people could not be depended upon, and he fled for his life. But he had made his choice. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." To follow him and behold what mighty work the Lord did through him will be our privilege in the chapters following.

Photos by Carl Lyman.

UPPER—CAMELS LOADED WITH ALFALFA IN EGYPT.
CENTER—SCENE NEAR CAIRO, THE CAPITAL CITY.
LOWER—BLINDFOLDED OX TURNING A WATER WHEEL.

CHAPTER XIII

Moses Fled From Egypt

NO MAN in all history gave up more for his people than did Moses. The throne of the greatest kingdom on earth was within his grasp. He was the greatest of the great. Honor of every description was at his feet. But to him God was above all and over all. He no doubt felt that the time had come for him to strike a blow for his people and did not hesitate. How sore must have been his disappointment. Joseph went from the dungeon to the throne, but Moses came near going from the throne to the dungeon. He fled from Egypt as a fugitive. He was not afraid so much for his own life as he was for the lives of his people. He had made a mistake in killing the Egyptian and knew it now. Before striking the death blow he looked this way and that, but he did not look up. For the moment he had left God out of the question. He fled across the desert and sat down by a well.

As he was sitting there, weary and footsore, some young women came up with their fathers' flocks. When they had filled the troughs with water some shepherds came up and drove them away. This aroused Moses and he drove the shepherds away and helped the girls water their flocks. They were so pleased, as well as amazed, that they ran home and when their father asked them how it came that they were home so early, they told him the whole story. They, of course, spoke of Moses as

an Egyptian. When the old gentleman suggested that they invite the stranger into their home to eat they were not slow in finding him and extending the invitation.

Married in the Wilderness

This country was called Midian. The owner of the flocks that Moses had helped to water was Jethro. He was also called Reuel and he was a priest of Midian. Zipporah was the name of one of the girls and Moses fell in love with her at first sight. Jethro was so pleased with Moses that they made a bargain at once. Of course, Moses and Zipporah got married. Forty years went quickly by. During that time Moses became familiar with every hill and valley and spring of water in the whole country. He longed to see his own people free and thought of them many times. Unconsciously he was being trained to lead his people across the very desert with which he was becoming so familiar. He no doubt applied his wisdom and great learning to the things about him. In the home life he and his father-in-law learned to appreciate each other.

The Burning Bush

In the meantime the condition of the Hebrews in Egypt had grown very bad. The people had changed somewhat, however, and the tide of skepticism and idolatry had turned toward God. Their burdens were very heavy and they cried to Him. When people really turn to God, He never fails to hear their cry. One day as Moses was going along he noticed a bush all aflame. Perhaps he had seen the bush burning before, but as it was

not consumed, this time he went to investigate. As he approached the bush he heard the voice of God calling his own name, telling him to take off his shoes, for the spot upon which he was standing was holy ground. Then the Lord told Moses that He had seen the affliction of the people in Egypt, that He had heard their cry and knew their sorrow, and that He had chosen him to go into Egypt and lead them back to their own land.

Called to a Mighty Task

At once Moses began to make excuse, pleading his own inability to do such a work, but the Lord told him that certainly He would be with him. Then Moses feared that when the people asked who sent him he would be unable to answer them properly, but the Lord told him how to overcome that. Moses pled that the people would not believe him, and the Lord told him that he would be armed with miraculous power. A demonstration of this power was given Moses that he might know of a certainty. The final excuse Moses offered was that he was not eloquent, but the Lord reminded him that he who made his mouth could also make it to speak. After all this Moses hesitated and the Lord told him that his brother, Aaron, would be his spokesman. How much better for Moses it would have been if he had not objected so seriously to going alone, for Aaron caused him trouble, as you shall see later on.

Some Severe Tests

Moses now went home and told his father-in-law all about it and Jethro gave him his blessing. So Moses took his wife and children and started.

Stopping at an inn for the night they had a time of it. The old saying, that it never rains that it does not pour, was true in this case. A son was born here and about the time the danger was over Moses nearly lost his life. The record says, "The Lord met him and sought to kill him." He evidently took suddenly ill with some fearful malady. It seems that Moses thought this scourge was sent upon him because he had neglected the rite of circumcision and he told his wife his fears. They evidently disagreed over it, but finally his wife performed the rite and then told Moses what she thought of him. He got better, however, and saw the folly of taking his family along on such a journey and sent them back home, starting on alone.

Brothers Separated Forty Years Meet Again

In the meantime the Lord had spoken to Aaron in Egypt and told him to go and meet Moses who was coming. Out on the mountainside the brothers met and it was a joyful and affectionate meeting. Moses kissed Aaron and told him all about the wonderful mission upon which they had entered. After a most delightful visit together they went on to Egypt.

On reaching their destination the first thing they did was to get the elders of Israel together, and, as Aaron was the spokesman, he told them all about their journey. Quite likely, too, the signs God had given Moses with the rod as well as the leprosy were used. The elders believed them and they all praised the Lord. The word was passed from lip to lip and home to home that night and perhaps by morning the whole multitude knew about it.

An Indignant Monarch

The next thing was to approach Pharaoh. What a change forty years had wrought! Moses was familiar with every nook and corner of the palace, and forty years before was almost next to the king himself. Now he came as a supplicant and had to stand silently by while another spoke for him. When Aaron spoke of the Lord of the children of Israel and demanded that Pharaoh let them go, it is not surprising that the king was indignant and asked, "Who is the Lord of these people that I should let them go? I don't know him and will not think of such a thing." He ordered them out of the palace and the next day an order was received by every taskmaster that made the burdens of the people heavier than ever before. The people were compelled to go out and gather straw and yet make the same number of bricks each day.

Overseers Who Were Heartless

Then followed terrible days. The taskmasters had been cruel before, but now they were heartless. A message was sent to the king, but he refused to revoke the order. It was not surprising that some of the people blamed Moses and Aaron for their increased burdens. This condition of affairs sent Moses to his knees. He prayed as he had never prayed before. He was completely discouraged, but the Lord assured him that all would come out well in the end. Moses went to the people with this assurance, but they refused to believe.

The picture we have of this time is about as dark as can be imagined. Their burdens were

heavy when they had straw, but now they must make the same number of bricks without straw. They had to gather stubble or sticks or anything they could get hold of. It was hurry under the lash from earliest dawn until twilight. But the darkest hour is just before the dawn. The power of God was soon to be seen as never before. The most powerful monarch could not withstand these men of God as they were soon to appear before him. At first they had come with a request, but they were soon coming with a demand.

CHAPTER XIV

Nile Running With Blood

PHARAOH'S court consisted of officials, priests and magicians. One morning when these, with the king, went down to the Nile to worship or bathe, they found Moses and Aaron already there. All the timidness of these men had disappeared and now Pharaoh was ordered to let the people go. When he refused, Aaron stretched his hand out over the Nile and the water was turned to blood, as Moses had told Pharaoh it would be. With a look of scorn the king turned without a word and went into the palace. For seven days blood was everywhere. The fish in the river all died. It was a terrible time. As the Egyptians worshipped the river Nile, now even their god was defiled. When Moses and Aaron first went to Pharaoh they performed a miracle with the rod they carried and the magicians were able to do almost the same thing. Now the magicians were brought in again and were able to satisfy Pharaoh that they were as powerful as Moses and Aaron.

The Egyptians worshipped all kinds of animals and even insects and each plague was not only a blow at their idolatry, but showed them that their gods were powerless to help them. When Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh he was still obstinate and the plague of frogs came. Frogs were everywhere, in the house, on the table, in the dough. Their cold, slimy forms creeping, jumping, croaking, until misery was in every home. No one dared kill them, because the frog was sacred.

Pharaoh Hardened His Heart

The continuation of this horrible plague moved Pharaoh to call Moses and Aaron, and he promised to let the people go if they would remove the frogs. In order to please the king Moses let him set the time when every frog should die. On the following day the only live frogs were in the river, but my! the land! They gathered them together in heaps and the odor was terrible. But as soon as the frogs were dead Pharaoh assumed his old aspect and went back on his word. Then came the plague of lice and even the magicians gave it up, but Pharaoh still hardened his heart.

Then came the plague of flies and this time the land of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived, was not touched. Among the Egyptians there were such swarms of flies and they became so burdensome that Pharaoh offered to make a concession, but when Moses entreated the Lord to remove the plague the king was as hard as ever and he went back on his word. Then came a pestilence among the cattle, and beasts of all kinds died. Oxen, camels, asses and horses all fell before the murrain. Even this did not move Pharaoh and the terrible plague of boils came upon the Egyptians and they suffered untold misery.

The Lord Hardened Pharaoh's Heart

Up to this time Pharaoh hardened his own heart, but at the close of the boil plague it is stated that the Lord hardened his heart. It seems that Pharaoh had been stifling every good thought that came into his heart; he had openly, wilfully and defiantly gone back on every promise he had made. God's spirit will not always strive with

man. It is possible for anyone to harden his heart and sear his conscience and go from bad to worse. The very things that ought to make his heart tender harden it. Now the Lord has gone to the limit. This wicked king simply cannot be moved and now there is sent upon him and his people still more awful calamities. The Egyptians must be shown that the God of the Hebrews has all power, and the Hebrews must be shown that the Lord can protect His people.

Moses next came before Pharaoh with a solemn and terrible warning, but it did no good. Then the thunders rolled, the lightning flashed and the storm broke forth in all fury. Hail, the like of which they had never seen, fell, even killing man and beast. Great trees fell and crops were ruined. Several references to this storm were recorded, hundreds of years later, in the Psalms. In the midst of the storm Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, confessed his sin, entreating them to stop the terrible thunder and he would let the people go. Moses went through the storm without harm to the gate of the city and prayed, and the storm ceased. The moment the sun began to shine, the king's heart was hard as ever and once more he repudiated his promise.

Plague of Locusts and Darkness

Now Moses came before Pharaoh with the courage of a lion demanding that he let the people go, warning him that if he did not change by the next morning a plague of locusts would come. Although the king knew what a calamity this would be, he did not change and the east wind brought great swarms of these pests. They came in such

numbers that the sun was darkened and they finished about everything that the hail had left. Once more Pharaoh sent for Moses and promised, only to go back on it as soon as the locusts had disappeared. Then came the plague of darkness, and for three days business was suspended. Pharaoh called Moses and offered to let the people go if they would leave their flocks. Moses quickly spurned the offer and told him they would not leave a hoof behind. Now, Pharaoh was almost beside himself with rage and ordered Moses to get out, whereupon Moses told him that he would never see them again.

The Last of the Plagues

The elders of Israel were now called together by Moses and Aaron, who repeated to them what the Lord had just told them, that there would be one more plague and they must make ready to leave Egypt at once. In all probably ten months had passed since Moses had reached Egypt. These mighty plagues coming upon the Egyptians, while the Israelites had not suffered from them, gave these people confidence in their leader. Moses ordered that each family should select a lamb without blemish. This was to be done on the tenth day of the month and they were to keep it until the evening of the fourteenth. On that night the death angel was to pass over Egypt and the first born in every home he entered would be slain. They were to slay the lamb, take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood, and make three marks on the door.

Then they were to roast the lamb and eat it with unleavened bread. They must not leave any of it; what they couldn't eat they must burn up. They must be all ready to go before they began to eat, must have their coats and shoes on and everything ready and must eat it in haste, for it was the Lord's passover. Wherever the blood was upon the door the angel would pass over that house. But no one must go out of their house until morning. By this time the people were ready to do anything Moses ordered and they were careful to obey his words. He gave them to understand that this was the beginning of a new era in their history and that they should always remember this event. Each year they should have a feast in memory of it and were to teach their children all about its purpose so that every boy and girl would understand about it.

Death Angel Passed Over Hebrews' Homes

Midnight of the memorable night came. While the Hebrews were all awake and following the instructions of Moses, the Egyptians were sleeping. A noted author says, "It was the early spring, a time of full silver moon, which shed her soft light in cascades of beauty on the land that lay beneath her; from where, on the western frontier, the Nile rolled its majestic volumes to the waters of the Red Sea on the far eastern border. All was still almost with a preternatural silence, broken only by the hoot of the owl, the scream of the bittern, the plunge of the monster into the waters, or the cry of the jackal on the plains.

A Scream of Anguish

"Suddenly the stillness was interrupted by a scream of anguish, as a mother rushed out into the night to tell that the angel of death had begun his work, and she was presently answered by the wail of a mother in agony for her first born; and this by another and yet another. It was useless to summon priest or physician, magician or courtier; how could they help others who had not been able to ward off death from their own? The maid grinding at the mill and her lady sleeping under curtains of silk were involved in a common sorrow, which obliterated all social distinctions and made all one. There was not a house where there was not one dead—even the palace was not exempt. The news spread like wildfire that the heir to the throne was dead, and there was a great cry in Egypt."

A Night of Terror

My! what a night was that! The home of the peasant, the brick mason, the water carrier, even the first born of the captive in the dungeon was dead. No wonder that Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. No wonder that he speedily called for Moses and Aaron before morning and said: "Rise up, and get you from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel: go and serve the Lord as ye have said. Also take your flocks and herds as ye have said and be gone; and bless me also." And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that they might get out of the land in haste: for they said, "We be all dead men."

CHAPTER XV

Israel Leaving Egypt

THE midnight cry among the Egyptians was a long and bitter wail. The Israelites were all ready for a long journey. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were urging them to depart. God gave them favor among the Egyptians and when they asked for jewels of silver and gold and raiment they were overwhelmed with gifts: so much so that someone has said that the Israelites departed from Egypt on a bridge of gold. They went forth, as someone has suggested, "not as slaves, but as conquerors decked with the jewels of the Egyptians, as though they had conquered and despoiled them."

There were six hundred thousand men in the company, so altogether there must have been more than two million of the Israelites as they left Egypt. If ever a man was busy it was Moses, but his orders moved the great company like clockwork. When the sun arose that morning it shone upon a happy company. Some think the men marched five abreast while their wives and children and baggage and flocks followed. Moses led the great host or at least the first detachment. Every leader had orders to head in toward Succoth. This place was perhaps fifteen miles from their starting point and made a big first day's march. Following the children of Israel came a mixed multitude of hangers-on and they were a source of continual grief, as we shall see later on.

Joseph's Bones Taken from Egypt

As the great company was leaving Egypt, Moses sent a company to the tomb of Joseph and got his bones, and they took them with them as had been promised hundreds of years before. At Succoth the people all came together and Moses gave them further instruction about keeping in memory the passover and teaching their children concerning its meaning. Leaving Succoth their next stop was at Etham. Instead of going the shorter way, through the land of the Philistines, the Lord led them around by the Red Sea. The chief reason for that was the Philistines were warriors and the first thing would have been a fight. The Israelites were not fighters and they might have been demoralized and fled back toward Egypt.

The Lord led them by a great Pillar of Cloud by day and at night this became a mighty Pillar of Fire round about them. From Etham they were led farther away from their destination. A short journey of one hundred miles would have taken them to Canaan, but the Lord knew best how to lead them.

Pharaoh Started in Pursuit

No sooner had the people left Egypt than Pharaoh waked up to the fact that his great brickyards were idle and that not a wheel of the mighty industries of Egypt was turning. At once he gathered a great host and organized an army for pursuit. This consisted in six hundred chosen chariots and one hundred thousand footmen with captains over them, and the race was on.

By this time the children of Israel had come up between two high mountains to the Red Sea. Im-

agine their amazement and fear when they saw this mighty Egyptian host closing in upon them. They were in a trap and escape seemed impossible. They were frightened nearly to death and Moses had more than he could manage. The people cried out to Moses in their anguish and accused him of leading them into this trap. For once Moses made a speech that did not please the Lord; perhaps he was excited and hardly knew what he said. He told the people to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. But the Lord said unto Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." (Just before this was finished the writer crossed this spot in the Red Sea.)

Pharaoh's Army Drowned

When Moses, at God's command, lifted up his rod and stretched it over the sea, the waters parted and the children of Israel marched into the sea. It is worth while here to turn to the seventy-seventh Psalm and read the closing verses. "The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. The way is in the sea and Thy path in the great waters and Thy footsteps are not known. Thou leadest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

As they passed through the divided sea with a wall of water on either side the Pillar of Cloud settled over the people, hiding them completely; it

Photos by Curtis Glick and Henry Wiederhold.

UPPER—A MOHAMMEDAN MOSQUE IN CAIRO.

CENTER—TRADITIONAL SPOT IN THE RIVER NILE WHERE PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER FOUND MOSES.

LOWER—THE OPENING AT THE TOMB OF KING TUTENKHAMEN WHERE SO MANY TREASURES WERE FOUND.

also became a terrible apparition to the Egyptians who were following them. Finally the people of God had all crossed, the last one up from the bed of the sea. The Egyptian hosts were following courageously, but all at once panic seized them. What happened is beyond the power of pen to describe. The hoarse commands of Pharaoh's captains were unintelligible on account of the awful shrieks of the panic-stricken soldiers. The chariot wheels clogged and were locked together and in vain the vast, frightened army tried to turn back. At this juncture Moses stretched forth that magic rod and the sea closed in and the old enemies of God's people were destroyed forever. Not one of them lived to tell Pharaoh the terrible story. His mighty host was completely annihilated.

A Mighty Praise Service

When it dawned upon the Israelites that their God was able to deliver them from the jaws of death and that the cruel taskmasters would never frighten or strike them again, it is not any wonder that a great praise service, the like of which was never held before, was held there on the banks of the Red Sea. It is not any wonder that the joy of their deliverance should find utterance in a glorious song of triumph. The great company was divided, the men on one side and the women on the other. Moses and Aaron led the men, while Miriam led the women, and they sang, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." What a fitting type is this passage through the sea and triumphal song to our own passage through the waters of baptism and the glorious rejoicing in the fact that our old sins are remembered against us no more forever.

From the sea the people plunged into the wilderness. From this great mount of transfiguration they went down into the valley of humiliation. The first day in the wilderness no doubt passed all right, for the people were yet jubilant over their great victory. But the second day seemed much longer. The sandstorm began to irritate them. From the fertile fields of Egypt, where they could perhaps see the great pyramids and obelisks, to the barren desert with high wind, biting sand, scorching heat and bitter thirst, was a marvelous change. On the third day you could hardly believe that this was the same company as were singing on the bank of the sea three days before.

From Minstrels to Mutineers

The water supply ran out, and their fevered lips were parched and their thirst was terrible. Murmuring rumblings could be heard all through the company. Moses, who knew every foot of the land, knew that it was not far to water, and no doubt encouraged them, but what they wanted was not so much encouragement as a drink of water. Toward evening they saw the waving palms of an oasis and all through the company the word was carried and once more the smile of victory returned. They almost ran toward the spring of water, but alas! when they tasted the water it was so bitter that they could not drink it. A regular storm of murmurings broke forth as they gathered around Moses, taking their spite out on him.

CHAPTER XVI

Moses a Wonderful Character

WE ARE beginning to see the greatness of the character of Moses on every hand. When the people began to storm about the bitter waters of Marah and find fault with Moses, he did not retaliate or rebuke them or grow despondent and discouraged; he cried unto the Lord. By the side of the spring was growing a tree which the Lord showed Moses would cleanse the waters. Very soon, however, they pushed on to Elim, where they found twelve springs of fresh water and seventy palm trees. Here they put up their tents and had a short rest.

On leaving Elim another crisis arose. Moses got it on all sides. It did not take the people long to forget the heavy burdens of Egyptian slavery, but they never did forget the flesh pots of that land. Evidently Pharaoh gave them plenty to eat, for they talked about it for years. Only a month before their backs were smarting from the lash of the taskmasters and during that short month they had seen wonders, and God in His providence had led them safely from Egypt and so far on their journey. But they forgot it all at every inconvenience and began to upbraid Moses for bringing them out in the desert to starve, as they expressed it.

Manna and Quails

After Moses had talked to the Lord, he and Aaron summoned the people and when they

looked toward the wilderness, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. They then told the people that by the next morning they would have plenty of both flesh and bread. Sure enough, that very evening great flocks of quails almost covered the camp and the next morning they all noticed something white like frost covering everything. They picked it up, saying to one another, "What is it?" which means "manna." On tasting it they found that it was good for food and Moses told them each to gather only what he needed.

Some of them were piggish, however, and instead of following the advice of Moses, gathered a lot of it, and by morning they could hardly stay in their tents with the stuff, it was so badly spoiled. The strangest thing about it was that on the day before the Sabbath they were told to gather a double portion and on that day it did not spoil. This manna tasted like wafers and honey and every man, woman and child among them liked it. It was their food for forty years and they never tired of it. For the first time now the people rested on the Sabbath, or seventh day.

Water from the Smitten Rock

The next stopping place was Rephidim. Here Moses had trouble galore with them. There was no good drinking water and the people became very thirsty. They came near being unmanageable and were about to stone Moses. The great leader was thoroughly frightened, but he went to the Lord with his fear and grief. The Lord told him to take his magic rod and go out to a big rock and solemnly, in the presence of the elders, smite the rock and water would come forth. Moses did as

the Lord commanded him and the result was plenty of good, fresh water.

A Mighty Battle

Now came the first battle with real enemies. The Amalekites, who were descendants of Esau, undertook to block the pathway of the people, as they did not want the intruders to cross their country. Joshua was a young man whose ability as a leader was evident to Moses, for he gave him command over the fighting hosts, telling him to get ready for a battle on the morrow. Moses said that he would go up on the mountain where he could see the entire field of battle.

Joshua made ready and the battle was fierce. When Israel lost ground Moses raised his hands, but the moment his hands were lowered the Amalekites gained. So Moses kept his hands high as long as he could. Aaron, and Hur (whom tradition says was Miriam's husband), hastened up the mountainside, got a big stone for Moses to sit upon, and one on each side they held up his hands until Israel won the victory. The Lord had Moses make a record of what would happen to the Amalekites in after years for trying to block the pathway of His people and it will be interesting to find out how this prediction was fulfilled. Before leaving Moses built an altar to the Lord on the battlefield.

A Happy Reunion

You will call to mind the fact that when Moses started to Egypt about one year before this that his wife and children started with him, but he sent them back to his wife's folks. As the great com-

pany neared his father-in-law's home, word of the mighty events and experiences preceded him and it is not surprising that his family was anxious to see him. So Jethro, his wife's father, brought them over to the camp. It was a happy meeting and nearly the entire day was spent in visiting and in the evening the day was closed with a feast. Jethro was very proud of his son-in-law and blessed him. The next morning Moses had to look after the people, as there were so many scraps and differences among them that Moses had to act as judge. This took all day.

Jethro was a wise man and saw that no living mortal could long stand the strain that was taxing Moses, and he suggested a change in the plan of hearing and taking care of these disputes. He suggested that Moses be the supreme judge and that he appoint good men to act as judges in all these smaller matters and that only those matters of extreme importance be brought to him. In fact, Jethro outlined the system of courts and judges that we use today. In Jethro's plan Moses was the judge of the supreme court. This plan so pleased Moses that he acted upon the suggestion at once and "chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens."

A Demonstration of Mighty Power

When they moved from Rephidim they came to the foot of Mount Sinai and camped. Here occurred some of the most momentous events of all their experience. Moses was called up on the mountain and the Lord told him that he should

say to the people: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."

Mt. Sinai Rocking Like a Cradle

Moses was also to have the people clean up and get ready for a great event. They were to see a mighty demonstration of power, for the Lord Himself was coming down. No one was to touch or even go near Mount Sinai. No beast was to go near it, for nothing could touch it and live. The people were all to sanctify themselves, washing all their clothes, and be ready for this marvelous meeting which was to be on the third day. On that day the trumpet would sound loud and long and this would be the call for all the people to come near to the mountain.

Moses went down and got everything ready and on the morning of the third day a great cloud overshadowed the mountain and the trumpet call was so loud that it frightened the people nearly to death. Even the strongest and most courageous among them trembled like a leaf. There were thunders and lightnings and smoke and the mountain rocked to and fro like a cradle.

Photos by Carl Layman and Paul Boyd.

Upper—The River Nile with Pyramids in the background.

Center—The Great Pyramid which covers thirteen acres of ground.

Lower—The Step Pyramid which is said to be the oldest in Egypt.

CHAPTER XVII

God Talks With Moses

THE last chapter closed with the people at the foot of Mt. Sinai where, amidst the thunder and lightning and shaking mountain, God spoke forth the ten commandments. The people were so frightened that they asked Moses not to let God speak to them lest they die, but that He speak to Moses alone and allow him to deliver the message to them. Then God talked with Moses, giving him many instructions for the people, and when Moses delivered the message the people promised to be obedient. Moses then wrote them in a book that they might be read from time to time.

And the Lord called Moses again to come up on the mountain, saying that He would give him the ten commandments written on tablets of stone. Leaving Aaron and Hur and the elders and priests to look after the people he took Joshua, his minister, and went up on the mountain. A great cloud covered the mountain for six days and on the seventh day the Lord called Moses into the cloud, where he remained forty days and nights. The people below saw the glory of the Lord on the top of the mountain. It looked like a great fire burning.

Pattern of the Tabernacle

While here the Lord told Moses that he should tell the people to contribute a free-will offering for the purpose of building a tabernacle where

they might worship Him. He also showed Moses a pattern of this tabernacle and gave him very explicit instructions about how it should be made. It was to be very beautiful and costly. Inside this was to be placed an ark or chest which was to be made of wood and overlaid with gold. The cover of this ark was to be pure gold and upon each end was to be a golden cherubim or angel. In the ark were to be kept the two tablets of stone. Also a table was to be made of wood and overlaid with gold which was to be placed in the tabernacle. Upon this was to be placed a golden candlestick to light up the inclosure. Near this table was to stand a small altar, upon which incense was to be burned.

A Movable Church

The Lord also told Moses that the people should carry this tabernacle with them to Canaan. Complete instructions were given not only how this tabernacle should be made, but how it was to be put up, taken down and carried. The sides were to be boards overlaid with gold, placed upon end and fastened together, while the roof was to be a curtain. There was also to be a fence around the tabernacle, something like a yard, and this was to be called a court. A large altar was to be made of wood and covered over with brass and this was to be in the court. On this altar were to be offered sacrifices, all of which would point to a future event which would affect the whole world for all time. A large basin of brass to hold water was also to be placed in the court not far from the big altar.

The Priestly Garments

Aaron and his sons were to be the priests of the tabernacle and were to have most beautiful and costly robes. Aaron would be called the high priest and he was to wear on his head a linen cap with a gold plate fastened on the front upon which was to be written HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Aaron was to wear three coats. The first was to be of linen with sleeves in it and reach down to his feet. The second was to be blue, sleeveless, and upon the fringe golden bells and ornaments to look like pomegranates. Over this coat was to be another shorter robe or coat, also without sleeves, and this was to be called an ephod. On the breast, Aaron was to wear a most beautiful breastplate with twelve diamonds in it, one to represent each tribe of the children of Israel. When the Lord had given Moses all these instructions, He gave him the two tablets of stone upon which the Lord had written the ten commandments with His own finger.

Moses on Mount Sinai Forty Days

While all this was taking place during these forty days the people below grew very impatient. They came to Aaron and said they did not know what had become of Moses and that they must have some gods to worship like they had in Egypt. Instead of telling the people this would be an awful thing and reminding them of their wonderful deliverance and how God had helped them, Aaron seemed to encourage them. At least, he told them to bring their earrings and jewelry, and he melted these up and made a golden calf for

them to worship. Aaron also built an altar before it and promised that on the next day they would have a celebration.

The next morning they were all up bright and early, eating and drinking and having a time of great revelry. Moses was still on the mountain, entirely ignorant of what was going on, but the Lord saw it and told him what the people were doing. Moses then took the two tables of stone, found Joshua, and they hastened down the mountain. When they came near, Joshua, who had led the army in the battle a few weeks before, said the noise sounded to him like they were fighting among themselves. Moses said it did not sound like war, but more like singing.

The Golden Calf

When they came within sight Moses got a glimpse of the golden calf and it made him so angry to think the people with Aaron and Miriam would act like a lot of heathens that he threw the tables of stone down and they were broken to pieces. My! how Moses did make things hum for a while around there. He made them burn that golden calf with fire, grind it into dust like powder, then threw it upon the water and made the people drink it. Then he gave Aaron such a curtain lecture as he never had before. Up to this time he had not noticed that the people in their revelry had discarded their clothing and were naked. Now he was so angry that he walked out to the gate of the camp and called, asking who was on the Lord's side. A lot of people came and stood beside him when he gave orders that every man take his sword and go out among the people

and slay them. Altogether about three thousand were killed, but it taught the people a mighty good lesson.

Moses Pleading for the People

The next day Moses called the people and told them they had committed a grievous wrong, but he would go and intercede and see if the Lord would forgive them. True to his promise, Moses went to the Lord and pled with all his power for God to forgive them. When his anger was kindled his countenance was like a thunder cloud, but now it was like the setting sun. The Lord told Moses that He would no longer go before the people in the cloud and that they would suffer for their sin.

Nevertheless He told Moses to go ahead and lead them to the promised land, that He would send an angel to guide and help them. He also told Moses to tell the people that they were stubborn and rebellious and that He would not go with them as before. When the people heard this they showed signs of great mourning. Moses then went up into the mountain and cut out two tables of stone like the first ones and prayed again for the people and God spared them and made an agreement with them that He would help them as long as they were faithful to Him.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

THE CITY OF CAIRO, EGYPT, AS IT APPEARS TODAY.

CHAPTER XVIII

A Wonderful Offering

WHEN Moses returned from the mount with the tables of stone which were to take the place of those broken, his face was so bright that the people were afraid to come near him. So when he wished to speak to them he put a veil over his face so they could not see it. When he called the congregation together he told them that no work whatever should be done on the Sabbath day. They were not even allowed to kindle a fire on that day.

Next he told the people what the Lord had said about making the tabernacle and asked that they make a free-will offering of gold and silver and brass, purple and fine linen, oil and precious stones, or most anything they had of value. So liberal was this offering that when enough was brought they still kept bringing more and more until Moses sent word throughout the camp that they need bring no more. Think of it! Asking the people to quit giving! Wouldn't that be great? This tabernacle was no little plaything, either, but was to cost a mint of money. Kitto, the great Bible scholar, estimates the cost of all the material in the tabernacle at one million one hundred and eleven thousand dollars. A single piece of furniture, the golden candlestick, cost twenty-seven thousand five hundred dollars. Both men and women were allowed to give in this offering.

The Tabernacle Completed

Two men, Bazaleel and Aholiab, were the leaders in the finest work in the construction, God having given them special ability along this line. They were assisted by many others, so the work went on rapidly. Every detail of the tabernacle is described, every board, cord and tassel. Many chapters in the Bible are given to it and no attempt at a description will be given here.

After the tabernacle was completed and set up, and everything put in its place, the pillar of cloud that went before the people now came over it, and the glory of the Lord filled the inside so that even Moses could not enter it. God no longer called Moses up on the mountain to talk with him, but called him through the tabernacle. At the command of God Aaron and his sons were now made priests. They were to go into the tabernacle and offer sacrifices for the people. Aaron was made the high priest and when he took a lamb and placed it upon the altar, the Lord sent fire from heaven to consume it. When the people saw this most wonderful demonstration they shouted for joy, for they knew that their offering pleased the Lord.

The Tabernacle Furniture

The tabernacle proper was divided into two rooms, called the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In the latter was the ark of the covenant in which were kept the tables of stone, an urn of manna, and the magic rod used by Moses and Aaron. On the ark was placed the mercy-seat and the two golden angels. Between the angels, or cherubim, was the Shekinah of glory or symbol of

God's presence. The golden censer was used for burning incense in the Most Holy Place. Only the high priest entered this room and he only once each year. In the Holy Place was the Altar of Incense upon which the priests offered sweet incense each morning and evening.

The Table of Shewbread was also in the Holy Place and upon this table the priests placed twelve cakes every Sabbath day. The Golden Candlestick was also in this room. In the outer court was the great Altar and the Laver. It is generally understood that the tabernacle was a type of the church and its mission, the Most Holy Place representing heaven, the Holy Place representing the church on earth and the outer court in which the structure was located representing the world.

The Different Kinds of Offerings

There were several different kinds of offerings. If a man wished to be forgiven for wrongdoing and brought an offering, the priests burned it upon the great altar and it was called a burnt offering. If a man was thankful for some blessing and brought an offering, a portion of it was burned and the balance used for food. In all there were eight different kinds of legal offerings.

Aaron had four sons and they were all made priests. They were to serve at the tabernacle and the Lord told them just what to do and how to do it. It was a dangerous thing to substitute another way of doing things. Moses was very particular about having the tabernacle made exactly according to the pattern shown him on the mountain. When it was completed Moses took Aaron and went into the tabernacle and committed to him

and his sons in particular and to all who would become priests, the keeping of the structure. This was the first time Aaron had seen the inside and the last time that Moses ever entered it. This, of course, was before any sacrifices had been offered in connection with it.

The Death of Disobedient Priests

Sacrifices, however, had been laid upon the great altar in the court. The people were gathered about, but hushed in silence. When Moses and Aaron came out of the tabernacle fire came down from heaven. It was a wonderful sight. When the people saw it they gave a mighty shout and fell upon their faces. This fire was never to be allowed to go out. The priests took some coals from the altar, went into the Holy Place and placed them on the golden altar, sprinkled some incense upon them and the sweet smell filled the whole apartment.

This first day was a great day, but before it was over the rejoicing was turned to sadness. Nadab and Abihu, two of the sons of Aaron, thought they would change the order just a little from the Divine instructions. They took some coals of fire from a place other than the great altar and went into the tabernacle to burn incense. The result was they never came out alive—they were burned to death. Men were called to carry their bodies out and bury them, but Aaron and his remaining sons were to show no signs of mourning whatever, as these men had died for disobeying the plain command of God. That must have been a day of fear for all the people. They must have been greatly impressed by the fate of these men who would dare to treat lightly the commands of God.

Law Against Strong Drink

The fact that immediately after this terrible experience the law concerning strong drink was given to the priests has led many to believe that Nadab and Abihu were intoxicated. Very great stress was laid upon cleanliness, and laws were next given concerning animals that should be used for food. Laws of purification also were given in very great detail. Leprosy, especially, was singled out and enlarged upon. The great reason for this was perhaps that this foul disease was taken as a type of sin. The fumigation of houses where lepers lived was mentioned. In all, several chapters in the Bible are occupied in giving what is called the ceremonial law.

The Day of Atonement

The one day in the year when the high priest was to enter the Most Holy Place was always to be a great day. It was called the Day of Atonement. Aaron, the high priest, had special garments of white to wear on that day. He must wash himself thoroughly and be absolutely clean. This was the busiest day in the year for the high priest. He went into the Most Holy Place three times on this day and offered twelve sacrifices. On this day the sins of the people were sent into the wilderness by means of the scapegoat. The sixteenth chapter of Leviticus gives a full account of the program for this great day.

Photos by Theodore Smith and Paul Boyd.

VIEWS OF THE SPHINX WHICH IS SAID TO BE THE OLDEST RELIC OF HUMAN WORKMANSHIP IN EXISTENCE—GREAT PYRAMID IN THE DISTANCE.

CHAPTER XIX

The First National Census

ABOUT a month after the tabernacle was set up, attention was given to taking a census of the people. The people were also organized into companies or tribes. There were thirteen tribes. The descendants of each of Jacob's sons constituted one tribe, except in the case of Joseph, whose descendants made two tribes. As there were twelve sons of Jacob, and Joseph's descendants constituted two tribes, all can readily see how it came that there were thirteen tribes.

When the census was completed it was found that there were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty men capable of bearing arms. This means that there were nearly three million people in the entire camp. The people were organized in a most orderly way and when they marched it was in perfect order. Also they had a regular order for the camp. The tabernacle was the center, with the tents of the people of the tribe of Levi, who were always to care for it, near by and then three tribes on each side. It is estimated that when the children of Israel were in camp according to the regular order, their entire camp would occupy a space about twelve miles square.

Instructions Given Regarding Feasts

While at the foot of Mt. Sinai, very explicit instruction was given on almost every conceivable

question that might come up in after years. Full instructions were given concerning the three great yearly feasts that had been ordered. These were the feasts of the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Also there were other occasional feasts. In this journey through the Bible it is impossible to give all these instructions in detail, for the entire Book of Leviticus and the first few chapters of the Book of Numbers in the Bible are given to them.

After the census was taken and the organization completed, the people out of the goodness of their hearts and without any solicitation brought an offering to the Lord. As the Levites were to have charge of the tabernacle, the others felt it their duty to help them, so the princes of the other twelve tribes brought six covered wagons and twelve oxen. These were set apart for use when they moved the tabernacle. Then they also brought an abundance of other offerings.

Feast of the Passover Observed

When the first anniversary of their leaving Egypt came, the people very solemnly observed the Feast of the Passover as they had been commanded. They were still at the foot of Mt. Sinai. After this feast was observed the next twenty days were spent in completing all arrangements to move on toward the promised land. One year before, when they left Egypt, says one writer, they were an unorganized mob of slaves. Now they were organized, with laws, a constitution, a priesthood, a movable house of worship, a political and military organization under judges and officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens, and a great

council of seventy elders which afterwards grew into the Sanhedrin. It is almost unbelievable that such a complete transformation could have been accomplished in twelve months' time.

Now they were ready to move. A complete system of signals had been arranged. Trumpets had been made for this purpose. One bright morning as the sun arose the Pillar of Cloud began to arise from its place over the tabernacle and the trumpet sounded. Instantly all was activity. The tabernacle was taken down. The oxen were yoked up to the wagons. Everything was moving like clockwork. All through the camp tents were folded. The standards were raised. The march was on. They were journeying toward the promised land.

A Pathfinder for a Nation

Among the peoples of surrounding nations who were at the camp to see the people start from Sinai was an Arab whose name was Hobab. He was a brother-in-law of Moses. He knew every hill and valley and spring of water in the wilderness. Moses invited this man to go along, saying, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." Hobab refused the invitation, saying that he must go back home to his family. Moses pled with him, saying, "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee."

Someone has suggested that the Arabs cover up their wells so that others cannot find them, hence Moses knew the value of having such a man with

them. While Hobab at first refused he finally decided to go with them.

When but three days from Mount Sinai several events occurred that must have made a deep impression upon the people. Some of them began to complain and murmur and it displeased the Lord so much that fire was sent among them and many were burned to death. The people came to Moses pleading that he intercede for them, and when he prayed the fire was quenched.

Trouble With the Mixed Multitude

A little later the mixed multitude which followed caused the people trouble. They discouraged the people and got them worked up into such a frenzy that they came weeping to Moses, saying that the manna was not good and that they longed for some of the good things that they used to have in Egypt. This was too much for Moses, and even he complained and asked the Lord to let him die. The Lord then told him to call the seventy elders and other officers and go to the tabernacle and He would come down and talk to them.

Moses was further told to go among the people and tell them that they must all clean up and get ready, that on the morrow they would have plenty of meat. When the Lord authorized Moses to tell the people they would have all the meat they could eat for a whole month it worried him, for he did not see where it could come from. He was afraid that all the cattle and sheep they had would have to be killed when the Lord said to him, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not."

Gift of Prophecy Bestowed

Moses therefore called the elders and had them take their places around the tabernacle. When the Lord came down He placed a portion of the responsibility that Moses had been carrying upon them. They were also given the power, or gift, of prophecy. There were two of these elders who for some reason were not in their places among the seventy, and when this gift came, the spirit of the Lord came upon them where they were and they began to prophesy. When Joshua saw that these men were prophesying he ran to the tabernacle and cried out, "Moses! Moses! Stop these men, for they are prophesying." Moses told Joshua to let them alone, saying to him, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them."

Then came a mighty wind that brought quails by the thousand. The people did nothing for a day or two but take care of quail meat. They ate so much of this meat that it made them sick and great numbers of them died. This plague was sent upon them because of their sin.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

EGYPT SHAWL MERCHANTS DISPLAYING THEIR GOODS.

CHAPTER XX

Trouble About Moses' Wife

MOSES had many heartaches. It was bad when the people complained and accused him of unworthy motives. This always made him feel bad and often discouraged him greatly. But it was the hardest when those nearest to him tried to do him harm. Just after the quail incident mentioned in the last chapter there occurred an event that must have disheartened him very much.

Moses had married while in the wilderness, as all remember. The incident of the starting to Egypt with his wife and children is still fresh in our memory. Now Aaron and Miriam, Moses' brother and sister, did not like this desert woman a little bit. Then, too, they envied Moses and talked about him behind his back. But the Lord heard every word of their conversation. Suddenly the call of the Lord came to Moses, Aaron and Miriam to come at once to the tabernacle.

Moses' Sister Miriam a Leper

When the three reached the tabernacle the Lord came down in the Pillar of Cloud and called Aaron and Miriam to come forth. Then the Lord told them how faithful Moses had been and how they should have feared to wrong him. On saying these things the Lord departed and lo! Miriam was a leper, white as snow. Aaron, when he saw his sister a leper, confessed all to Moses and asked him to forgive them. Moses did so freely and

prayed earnestly to the Lord that his sister might be healed. The prayer was answered, but the whole camp was stopped seven days and she was shut out from them for that length of time.

Finally camp was broken again and the people came to Kadesh-Barnea, which is the southern gateway of Palestine or Canaan. The command had been given for them to enter and possess the land. It rightly belonged to them, for Jacob had left it hundreds of years before and the people in it had no right to it. On reaching the border they hesitated. Had they trusted the Lord and obeyed Him all the thirty-eight years' wandering in the wilderness would have been avoided. He never intended that they spend these years in the desert.

Spies Sent into Canaan

To hesitate often means to be lost. As they stopped on the border the people became afraid and wanted to send spies over into the land to see what it was like. The Lord finally told Moses to select one man from each tribe and send them out. This was done. They were gone forty days and when they returned they all gave a glowing account of the country. They said it was a goodly land, flowing with milk and honey. They also brought samples of the fruits of the land.

But on the question of going right in and possessing the land these men were divided. Ten of them advised the people not to undertake it, as the people of the land were giants and their cities were all fortified. Two of the spies, whose names were Caleb and Joshua, gave different advice, saying that the children of Israel were abundantly able to take the land.

Life of Moses Threatened

There was little sleep in the camp that night. In fact, it was a terrible night. At first the rumblings of dissatisfaction were heard and then it became open and defiant rebellion. It was, no doubt, the most terrible night of all Moses' experience. While he was up on the mountain forty days the people even talked of electing a captain and going back to Egypt. Moses was absent then and did not know about any such talk. But now the threats were open and above board.

This great man had been a father to them, bearing their burdens for two years, and now they were ready to reject him. Is it any wonder that Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces and cried out to God? No wonder that Joshua and Caleb, the two who were in favor of their going right in, rent their garments and tried to speak to the people. Had not the Lord interfered just at this time it is quite likely that Moses and Aaron and Joshua and Caleb as well would all have been stoned to death.

Moses Pleading for His People

But just then the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle before all the people. This silenced them at once. The Lord told Moses that He had witnessed the whole scene and that He was ready to smite the rebellious people and disinherit them and take Moses and raise up a mighty nation. Then Moses began pleading with the Lord for the people. There is nothing finer in all the literature of the world than this plea of Moses for the people who but a few hours before were rejecting his leadership and threatening his life.

Moses' pleadings saved the people, but they were doomed to wander in the wilderness until all the rebellious people who were above twenty years of age should die. When Moses told the people this, they were sorry for what they had done. In the morning they rose up and said they were willing to go into the land, but Moses told them not to start, for the Lord would not help them and they would be killed. But they started out just the same and the Amalekites and Canaanites gave them battle and many were killed, after which they were glad to stay near the tabernacle.

Several events now occurred that showed the people that if they trifled with the commands of God it was at their peril. The order had been given and was understood by all, that no work whatever was to be done on the Sabbath day. One man was found who gathered up some wood on this sacred day. He was brought before Moses and Aaron, who made him a prisoner until God spoke to Moses, saying that the man should be stoned to death, which was done immediately.

Earth Swallowed Faultfinders

The next day Korah, Dathan and Abiram and a lot of their sympathizers, two hundred and fifty in all, complained against Moses and Aaron. Moses commanded all to get away from these two hundred and fifty people and that he would let the Lord deal with them. The people got out of the way quickly, and the earth opened up and literally swallowed these rebellious people and that was the last of them. Two hundred and fifty others who had a hand in the affair were burned up with strange fire.

On the next day a number of the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, blaming them for the destruction of the two hundred and fifty whom they said were good people. At this moment they looked toward the tabernacle and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared. Moses and Aaron quickly hurried to the tabernacle and the Lord told them to get away, that all these complainers might be swept away by a plague.

Moses told Aaron to take his censer and put fire upon it and go quickly in and make atonement, for the plague had already begun. Thus commanded, Aaron ran quickly into the tabernacle and as the record says "stood between the living and the dead" and the plague was stayed. But fourteen thousand seven hundred died before the plague was stopped.

Photos by Dr. Sunkle.

UPPER—THE RIVER JORDAN WHERE THE ISRAELITES CROSSED INTO CANAAN.

CENTER—FOUNTAIN OF ELISHA AT JERICHO.

LOWER—BEDOUINS OF THE PLAINS OF THE JORDAN.

CHAPTER XXI

The Miraculous Rod

MOSES could hardly get over the accusation that he and Aaron were self-appointed leaders. The Lord told him how to bring about a test that would settle the question of the priesthood for all time. Each of the princes was to bring a rod with the name of the tribe written upon it and these twelve with the one used by Aaron were to be placed in the tabernacle overnight. The Lord told Moses to tell the people that He could make one rod grow and blossom like a tree and the owner would be his chosen priest. It was done. Aaron's rod had his name upon it as the others had their respective names.

On the morrow they went to get the rods and lo and behold, "Aaron's rod was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds." This settled the question for good and the people were all perfectly satisfied. The Lord then told Aaron what should be the priest's portion and that the tribe of Levi would have no inheritance, but that all the other tribes should set apart one-tenth of all they raised for the Levites. This became the law and was understood by all the children of Israel.

All these years of wandering in the wilderness passed by. But few events are recorded. Near the close of the wilderness wandering they came to the desert of Zin, and stopped at Kedesh. Here Miriam, Moses' sister, died and was buried. This

fact is simply mentioned and nothing more said about it.

Moses Disobeyed the Lord

There was no water to speak of at Kedesh and the people came to Moses and Aaron complaining as usual. Of course, these good men went to God as they always did in times of trouble. The Lord told Moses to take his rod and take Aaron and gather all the people together around a big rock and water would come forth. Moses was now an old man. He had been patient and kind, but now he was tired out. When they had all gathered around the rock, instead of speaking quietly to the rock as the Lord told him, he took his rod and smote the rock twice.

It is almost unthinkable that Moses, who had so often admonished the people to be obedient, should himself become disobedient, but it is true. For this act of disobedience Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land. This was almost more than the old hero could stand and he prayed, "Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan." No patriot ever longed to get to his fatherland as Moses longed to enter Canaan, but it was not to be. While the Lord freely forgave his sin, He did not allow him to enter the land, as we shall see later on.

Old Enemies Active

Between the children of Israel and their future home was the land of Edom. Long ago, we read, Esau took possession of this land. Of course, Esau died hundreds of years before this, but the people still remembered how he was wronged by

Jacob. Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom asking permission to go through the country, but the request was refused. The messengers pled to go across, stating that they would go along the highway and would be careful not to destroy anything, and would even pay for the water they used, but the Edomites not only still refused, but gathered an army to fight the Israelites in case they attempted to go across.

Death of Aaron

When Moses saw that it was no use he turned away from Edom and came by way of Mount Hor. Moses was then told by the Lord that Aaron would die there and that he should take Aaron and his son Eleazer up into Mount Hor in sight of all the people. When the three were there Moses stripped Aaron of his priestly garments and put them on Eleazer, and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. When the people saw that Aaron was dead they mourned for him for thirty days.

About this time Arad, the king of the Canaanites, found out that the Israelites were near, and he gathered his army and went against them taking some of them prisoners. This made the Israelites so indignant that they vowed that if the Lord would help them they would annihilate these Canaanites, and they carried out their vow.

The Fiery Serpents

As the people went up from Mount Hor the way was rough and they got discouraged and began to complain again. They not only spoke against Moses, but against the Lord as well, and fiery serpents were sent among them and many died. The

people came to Moses and acknowledged their sin and asked him to pray for them, which he did. The Lord then told Moses to make a great serpent of brass and lift it upon a pole and all who would look upon it would be healed. This was done, and long ages afterward the Master Himself said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

As the people journeyed on they had many fights with other peoples who tried to block their pathway. When they reached the land of Moab, the king secured the prophet Balaam to curse them. The night before this was to be done the Lord appeared to Balaam, telling him not to attempt such a thing. The next morning Balaam sent word to Balak, this king, saying that he could not curse these people. Balak then sent other princes to him offering him great honor if he would do the job. Balaam sent word back to Balak that he would not do it though he would give him a houseful of silver and gold, but in his heart the man wanted that silver and gold.

A Donkey That Talked

The next morning this prophet mounted his beast and started for Moab. On the way he was riding between a vineyard and a stone wall when an angel blocked the way, but this angel was unseen by Balaam. The beast was so frightened that it whirled around quickly and mashed Balaam's foot against the wall. This made Balaam so angry that he began to beat the beast and actually wished for a sword that he might kill it. The Lord opened

the mouth of the animal so that it spoke to Balaam and, when he was so surprised, his eyes were opened so that he, too, saw the angel and knew then what the trouble was.

The angel of the Lord told Balaam to go on, so he went and presented himself to King Balak. At once the king and Balaam went upon the hill and offered sacrifice and when Balaam went to curse the people he blessed them instead. They then went over to another place and tried again with the same result. Every time Balaam tried to curse the Israelites he blessed them instead and that was just what the king did not want. As they tried still again the result was the same and Balaam foretold the future happiness of the Israelites.

Balaam Hired to Curse Israel

Although Balaam could not curse the Israelites as he tried to do, he told the Moabites how to get at them in another way. He told them to go in with the Midianites and tempt the people to sin. This was done by inviting all the people to an idolatrous feast. The people accepted the invitation and went to the feast, but it so displeased the Lord that He sent a pestilence among them and twenty-four thousand of them died.

Then the people were numbered a second time and it was found that all the men had died except Moses, Caleb and Joshua, who were above twenty when they turned from Canaan nearly forty years before. Each tribe furnished a thousand men and they almost annihilated the Midianites, and Balaam was killed in the battle. The remarkable thing about it was that not a single Israelite was killed.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

UPPER—DRAWING WATER AT A WELL IN JERUSALEM.
CENTER—SCENE BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND BETHLEHEM.
LOWER—A PALESTINE VILLAGE OF TODAY.

CHAPTER XXII

Near the Banks of the Jordan

FINALLY the children of Israel camped not far from the Jordan river. While there two of the tribes, Reuben and Gad, saw that the country east of the river was good grazing country and they had great herds of cattle and sheep. Their leaders came and asked Moses if they could have this land east of the Jordan for their possessions, as it was good for grazing.

Moses evidently misunderstood these leaders and thought the chief reason they did not want to pass over Jordan was because they were afraid to fight the enemies which had to be driven out. He did not like it and said they wanted to sit at ease while their brethren fought.

These leaders then told Moses that he had misunderstood their motive, that they would build folds for their sheep and cattle, and houses for their families, and that the men would go over Jordan and help drive the enemies out and then return to their own homes.

This pleased Moses greatly and he allowed them and a portion of another tribe, who wished to do so, to go ahead and build their houses and folds. He told them, however, that if every man did not come around when they were ready to cross the river and fight, that their possessions would be taken away from them.

Moses Near the End of the Journey

Moses, the heroic leader, was now nearing the end of his earthly career. He realized that he was soon to pass away. Although his strength was not abated and his eye was not dim, yet he seemed to have no regrets. He had pled with the Lord to be allowed to lead the Israelites across the river into Canaan, but when he found that his request could not be granted he was reconciled to the Lord's will. He therefore called the people together and gave them his farewell addresses.

These addresses of Moses to the people he had led for forty years are great classics. They are given us in the book of Deuteronomy. This word Deuteronomy means "a rehearsal" and it surely is a proper name for these farewell talks. Moses simply rehearses to the people the story of the forty years. He mentions some things that are new to us, for, of course, the entire history is not given in detail. We wonder, for instance, why Moses mentioned the iron bedstead of King Og, but it must have been to impress the people that this wonderful giant was greater than any they would ever meet again. If Og could be slain so easily they need fear no other king they would ever meet.

Moses' Farewell Addresses

The first one of these addresses tells us all about the deliverance from Egypt and how the Lord guided and protected them during their sojourn across the wilderness. Then he reminded the people of sending the spies and accepting their evil report and how for this they were doomed to wander all these years in the wilderness. He even re-

minded the people of his own sin and tells how he pled with the Lord to be allowed to lead them into the promised land, but when the Lord told him he could not he said no more about it.

The danger signal is held up in the closing portion of this first address when he told the people that if they persisted in doing evil they would be scattered among the nations. No nation had ever before seen such demonstrations of divine power as they had witnessed since leaving Egypt. With this warning, however, there was a message of hope in that wherever they might be, or in whatever condition they might be, if they would turn to the Lord He would hear their cry and help them.

A Wonderful Sermon

The second address was the longest and it was a general exhortation to the people to be obedient to the law. He stated the ten commandments again and admonished the people to be very careful about obeying them and teaching this law to their children. Idolatry must be completely blotted out and every monument to an idol in Canaan must be utterly destroyed. All intercourse with idolaters was to be avoided and even if a prophet, or one's dearest friend, should lean toward idolatry and uphold it he should not be spared. Even a report that someone had said a good word for idolatry should be investigated, and if found true, the whole city in which the offenders lived was to be destroyed.

The kind of food people should eat was clearly pointed out, the various feasts they should observe together, and a great many laws and ceremonies, all were given in minute detail. They were given instruction about landmarks and

boundaries, the number of witnesses to establish a charge against one accused, the punishment to be meted out against false witnesses, the conduct of war, exemption from service in war, the treatment of enemies, besieging of cities, burial of malefactors, and instruction on many other problems that might arise.

The Cities of Refuge

In this second address, as well as in other places, instructions were given as to cities of refuge, where one who had accidentally killed another might go and be safe until he had a chance to defend himself. The people had been instructed that if one killed another through hate he would be a murderer and the murdered man's relatives could kill him wherever they found him. If a man accidentally killed another he was never safe for a moment, for any day or night the man's brother or relative might kill him without a moment's warning, hence the cities of refuge. There were to be a half dozen of these places of refuge and there must be made good roads leading to them with guideboards along the way. When a man reached one of these places of refuge he must tell the elders who lived there all about the accident and they would allow him to live there until the whole matter was cleared up.

In the third address Moses told the people that the day they passed over into Canaan they must take some stones and build a monument and plaster it with cement and while this was soft they should write the ten commandments and when it became hard it would remain for ages. They should gather at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim and proclaim all these things in a most solemn manner.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Death of Moses

IT CAN almost be said that Moses died with a song on his lips. His last utterance was a song, and a mighty anthem it was, too. The final instructions were given concerning the law, Joshua was duly appointed as his successor, and all things were ready for his departure. He had finished his task and was ready for the Lord's call.

Moses must have told the people that his last day had come. No doubt there was silence throughout the camp as the old hero started up on Mount Nebo alone. There must have been a look of joy upon his face. He lived very near the Lord all the time. As he reached the top of the mountain he could see nearly all over the promised land. How he must have feasted his eyes upon the land that flowed with milk and honey. God did not let him enter Canaan, but took him to heaven instead. The people he had led for forty years never saw his face again. He died on the top of the mountain and the Lord buried his body. It was never found. For thirty days the people wept for their leader who had gone home. The mightiest hero of all history had taken his place somewhere near the throne and the world was lonely without him. Hundreds of years later Peter, James and John saw him with the Master on the Mount of Transfiguration and they knew him at first sight.

Joshua the Next Great Leader

God buries the worker, but carries on the work. The days of mourning are now over and the new leader has the fire of a mighty warrior. There are great battles to fight and the leader must be a great general. For forty years he had been in training. Joshua was just the man for the place now that the conquest of Canaan was on. His first act was a command full of the word *go*. Everybody must get ready for business now. From the camp, or at least from an elevation, they could see the first city in their pathway. Nearly everything would depend upon the first battle. Joshua was determined that, with the help of God, he would make this a great victory. The Lord spoke to him again and again, telling him to be strong and of good courage and to be careful to obey all that was written in the law.

Joshua sent a couple of spies across the Jordan to the city of Jericho. When they reached the city they stopped at the home of a woman named Rahab, whose house was on the city wall. It was not long until the report got out and reached the king that some Hebrew spies were in the home of Rahab. The king sent his officers to get them, but Rahab was too smart for them. She hid the men beneath some flax and denied that she knew where they had gone. No little excitement was caused by the incident and a posse was organized and started to search the country round about. Night had come on and the gates of the city were closed.

Spies Sent to Jericho Saved by Rahab

Rahab then told the spies how the people of Jericho had heard all about the marvelous vic-

tories of the children of Israel and how the Lord had opened the Red Sea for them and all such and how these people of Jericho were nearly frightened to death. They knew the camp was just across the River Jordan and that they would be the first to suffer when the Hebrews crossed the river.

Rahab also made these spies swear that when the city was taken they would save her and her family, which promise the men were glad to make. They told her that she should keep a scarlet thread hanging in her window and by that sign they would know her place. Then she told them how to escape and let them down over the wall by means of a rope and they followed her instructions and got away all right. On returning to camp they reported to Joshua what they had discovered.

Ready to Cross the River Jordan

The next morning things were lively throughout the camp. The Jordan was overflowing its banks and the people of Jericho felt pretty safe as long as the river was high. Three days they camped on the river bank. Then the officers went through the camp and instructed the people to watch the ark of the covenant. It was to be carried about a half mile in advance of the hosts. Nothing was said about how they were to cross the seething, surging, foaming waters. Maybe as yet Joshua himself did not know. They were walking by faith and not by sight.

Then the Lord said unto Joshua, "This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel that they may know that as I was with Moses so I will be with thee." Then instructions were given

to proceed and Joshua gave the command to move. On the priests came bearing the precious ark and the people must have been dumfounded when they saw them marching down to the water's edge.

Entering the Land of Canaan

As the feet of these priests touched the water it receded and they marched down into the center of the stream and stopped. Then the company all marched across on dry ground. Twelve men, representing the twelve tribes, took each a stone, and in the middle of the river they quickly erected a monument where the priests stood. Twelve stones were also taken from the river and another monument erected at Gilgal, where they camped. When all had passed over, the water resumed its course as before.

Now a new day had dawned. There was no going back. The Rubicon had been crossed. The bridges were burned, as we would say. Before them, and but a few miles away, was a walled city. At Gilgal the passover was kept and the rite of circumcision, which had been neglected, was attended to. This was done with knives of stone made for that purpose. It is declared that a skeptic once said that if he could go to Gilgal and find some of these sharp stones, or knives of stone, as they are called, he would believe. Having plenty of time and money he went, more out of curiosity than anything else, and some of the sharp stones were found.

It was not any wonder that when the kings of the Canaanites heard how the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground that "their hearts

melted" and they were afraid of these people whose God was so powerful. While in camp at Gilgal the people had their last meal of manna, for it ceased. It was harvest time, however, and they were now in a land of plenty and the manna was no longer needed.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold

MODERN JERUSALEM SHOWING THE MOSQUE OF OMAR. TALL TOWER IN BACKGROUND IS ON MOUNT OF OLIVES.

CHAPTER XXIV

Joshua Met an Angel

JUST before attacking the city of Jericho, Joshua, it seems, went out alone on a tour of investigation. As he came near the city he looked up and saw a man with a drawn sword in his hand. Now Joshua was not afraid of any man, and he went right up to this stranger and demanded whether he was for them or for their enemies. He replied that he was captain of the Lord's hosts and had come to tell him how to win the victory over the enemies. It is no wonder that Joshua removed his shoes and worshipped this heavenly messenger. It was then revealed to Joshua how he should proceed to take the city of Jericho.

The people of Jericho were badly frightened when Israel camped but a couple of miles away. They shut the gates of the city up tight. According to instructions given by the captain of the Lord's hosts, the soldiers were to march silently around the city each day for six days and on the seventh day they were to go around the city seven times. Seven priests with trumpets of rams' horns were to follow the ark, which was to be carried in advance. On the seventh day, after they had gone around seven times, the priests should blow their trumpets and the people were to give a mighty shout and the walls were to fall down. Rahab and her family only were to be kept alive and the people were commanded not to appropriate a thing in the city for themselves.

Marching Around Jericho

Early in the morning of the first day the procession started. Everything was silent except the tread of a million feet and the chant from the trumpeters, which no doubt enabled all to keep step. It is quite likely that the people of the city, hundreds of them, climbed upon the wall and watched the silent procession. Each day for six days the procession moved like clockwork, and no doubt that after a day or two the people on the wall grew bold and insulting.

On the morning of the seventh day everybody was up bright and early. This was to be a great day. Around the city they marched seven times, but at the close of the march the walls were as strong as ever. Not a stone loosened. Then the priests blew the trumpets loud and long and still not a crack in the walls. Then Joshua said to the people "*shout,*" and how they did yell. Down came the walls and the city was taken without striking a blow. When the task was completed and everything destroyed, except Rahab and her family and possessions, barring the gold and silver, brass and iron which was to be kept sacred for the Lord's treasury, Joshua pronounced a curse upon the man who should attempt to rebuild the city.

Of course, the children of Israel were jubilant and the peoples round about scared more and more. The next city in their pathway was Ai, and Joshua sent spies up to look it over. When they returned they said it would be folly to send more than two or three thousand men up there, as it was a difficult march and the people of Ai were few in number.

Joshua took the advice of these spies and sent about three thousand and the people of this little city put up such a fight that Israel was routed and defeated, losing thirty-six men. In fact, the very men who were so brave at Jericho a few days before were all cowards and these men ran them out of their community.

A Defeat That Was Heartbreaking

This disgraceful defeat nearly broke Joshua's heart. He knew that there was something wrong somewhere. He rent his clothes, fell upon his face before the ark of the covenant and wept grievously. The priests also threw dust upon their heads and showed signs of great mourning. Then it was that the Lord spoke to Joshua and told him to get up; that there was sin in the camp and that there was no use talking, He would not help them until there was a cleaning up.

Now, the fact was, a man by the name of Achan had disobeyed the command of the Lord by appropriating to himself a Babylonish garment, a lot of silver and a wedge of gold. He had hidden these things in his tent and no one was the wiser, as he thought, at least.

Finding the Offender

Early the next morning Joshua commanded that the tribes come forth before the Lord in an effort to find the offender. The tribe of Judah was taken first of all. Achan belonged to this tribe, but as yet was not frightened in the least. Next the families of the tribe of Judah were brought and the family of the Zarhites was taken. This no doubt made Achan very uneasy, for this was his family. This family was then brought forth man by man

and when Zabdi was taken Achan turned pale, for this was his grandfather. The name of that family was called forth and Carmi, Achan's own father, was taken. By this time perhaps they could tell that Achan was the man, for he was trembling like a leaf. Soon the announcement was made and a death-like silence came over the entire camp.

Joshua's great heart is seen in what followed. He spoke kindly to Achan, calling him his son. He then pled with him to confess the whole thing, whatever it might be, and Achan broke down and told the whole story, how he saw, coveted and took the above-named treasures and that at that moment they could be found in his tent. A messenger was sent in haste and the buried treasures brought forth.

A Danger Signal of History

The fate of Achan was a mighty warning; it is another of the danger signals of history. They took Achan and his stolen treasure, his sons and daughters, his oxen, asses and sheep, his tent, and everything he had, down in the valley and stoned all to death and burned them with fire. Then they gathered a great heap of stones to mark the spot where the execution took place and called the ravine the Valley of Achor.

Joshua did not propose to have another defeat, so he chose thirty thousand of his best warriors and planned a novel method. They all went up to the city of Ai and this time the men came out brave as lions. This time Joshua had divided his army and had thousands waiting in ambush at certain places. When the king of Ai and his army came out of the city Joshua and his men fled as be-

fore. This brought all the men from the city and they followed the fleeing men down the hill past the first who were in ambush, and they rushed up into the city and set it on fire. When the king of Ai and his army looked back and saw their city burning they found that they had fallen into a trap and they were all taken. The king was hanged to a tree until evening and then the body was burned.

Photographs by Mr. Boyd

Upper—Caravan in Egypt
Center—Old Babylon in Egypt
Lower—Museum in Cairo

CHAPTER XXV

A Gigantic Deception

JOSHUA'S victories at Jericho and Ai and the fate of the people of these cities filled the people of Canaan with great fear. Some of these little nations thought best to combine and fight the Israelites, but one nation near by was led by men who were genuine schemers.

These leaders took old worn-out clothes and shoes and tied them upon their bodies, gathered up some old wine skins that were ready to burst, took moulded bread and came as ambassadors to Joshua. They told him they were from a far country, but had heard of his wonderful victories and wished to make a treaty with him.

When Joshua asked them where they lived they said their country was far away, that when they started their clothing and shoes were new and their bread was just from the oven. Joshua was so moved by the sincerity of these people that he made a treaty with them at once without even taking time to ask the Lord about it.

Joshua Kept His Word

Imagine the great warrior's surprise a few days later when he found out how these Gibeonites had outwitted him, for he was in their country at the time. When Joshua called these leaders and asked why they deceived him, they said they feared for their lives and they acknowledged the whole thing and pled for mercy. Of course, the treaty had

been signed and their lives were safe, but these Gibeonites were made servants and forced to wait upon the Israelites.

When the kings of the surrounding country heard that the Gibeonites had made peace with Joshua, five of them combined their armies and swooped down upon these people of Gibeon and undertook to annihilate them. The men of Gibeon were quick to appeal to Joshua to save them. At once Joshua gathered his men of war and hastened to the rescue. In the great battle that followed the Lord helped Joshua greatly by sending a terrific hailstorm which killed as many as were slain in battle. These five kings and their armies were completely routed and those who were not killed in the hail or battle were getting away as fast as they could when night overtook them. Then it was that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and the moon to stop in its course, which they did for many hours.

Five Kings Hid in a Cave

In the meantime these five kings had hidden in a cave. When Joshua found this out he ordered a great stone rolled into the door of the cave and made them prisoners in their hiding place, setting a guard to see that they did not get out. When all of these enemies had either been killed or had taken refuge in their walled cities, Joshua came back and opened the cave and brought the five royal prisoners out and hanged them on five trees. In the evening their bodies were cut down and buried in the cave and a great heap of stones piled at the door.

For some time it was war, war, war. This land belonged to the Israelites, but in their absence these enemies had taken possession of it and were determined to hold it. Joshua had to subdue all of these people. One would think they would have left the country, knowing the justice of Israel's claim, but they didn't get out, and twenty-four more kings and their people were almost annihilated.

Dividing the Land Among the Tribes

Finally nearly all had been driven out except some giants who had taken possession of some mountains and far-away sections of the country. Joshua was now an old man and the Lord told him to divide the land up among the tribes. While the tribe of Levi was not to have any land to plow or sow, yet they were given forty-eight cities in which to live. As each of the other tribes was to give one-tenth of his income for the Lord's work this enabled the priests and Levites to live as comfortably as did the others. In the meantime the tabernacle had been moved up to Shiloh, an altar built, and the worship of the Lord established permanently.

A Heroic Request

Before the land was all divided up, one very impressive incident occurred in which the oldest man in all the thousands was concerned. This man was Caleb who, you remember, was one of the spies sent out by Moses perhaps sixty years before. This man Caleb was now a hoary-haired patriarch. He certainly would be entitled to an easy time during the few remaining years of his life.

Down in the sòuth among the mountains of Hebron was this unconquered land where the giants lived. So, before the allotment of the land was made, Caleb came to Joshua and the elders, saying that he had one request to make, which was that they give him that land for his inheritance. His request was granted and the oldest man thus received the most difficult task because he wanted to die in the harness.

Two and one-half tribes had received their allotment of land on the east side of the Jordan before Moses died, but on crossing the river all the men had gone over to help in the conquest. These men were now allowed to go back home. They were sent away with Joshua's blessing, but they did a thing on leaving that almost brought on civil war.

Near to Civil War

When these people, the tribes of Reuben and Gad and one-half of the tribe of Menassah, arrived home they built a great altar. To build another altar, when all had been commanded to go to Shiloh to worship, almost looked like treason. When Joshua and the people heard it they discussed the problem thoroughly. Reason prevailed, however, and it was finally decided to send Phineas, the son of Eleazer the priest, and ten of the princes over the river to see what their brethren meant by the action in building the altar.

When Phineas and his company arrived they told their brethren the mission that brought them over so soon. They reminded them that to build another altar upon which to offer sacrifices was plain disobedience and reminded them that it was a terrible thing to disobey the Lord, citing the case of Achan as an example.

A Satisfactory Explanation

The brethren east of the Jordan then explained their action to the entire satisfaction of all. They said the River Jordan was a natural border and in the course of time it might be that their children would forget that they really belonged to the children of Israel. They had, therefore, built this altar just like the altar at Shiloh for a witness between them for all generations. If such a condition ever did arise these brethren east of the Jordan could say to those west of the river, "Behold the pattern of the altar to the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you." This not only explained the situation, but pleased the whole congregation.

Joshua's Farewell Address

Just before Joshua died he gathered all the people together at Shechem near the old home of Jacob, which is in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizem. Here he delivered a great farewell address. He made the people promise that they would be true and loyal to the commands of the Lord. He made a covenant with the people that day, wrote the words in the book of the law, and set up a great stone under a mighty oak tree for a witness.

Soon after this event Joshua died, at the age of one hundred and ten years. His body was buried on the ground of his own inheritance, which was not far away. Also the people brought the bones of Joseph, which they had brought with them from Egypt, and buried them at the old home where he had played when a little boy.

Photos by Dr. Sunkle.

UPPER—PALESTINE WOMEN DRAWING WATER.

CENTER—VALLEY OF HENNOM AND POOL OF LOWER GIHON NEAR JERUSALEM.

LOWER—A SCENE IN BETHLEHEM.

CHAPTER XXVI

Fifteen Judges in Three Hundred Years

AFTER the death of Joshua the people often fell into sin. Enemies were all around the children of Israel and they had a time holding their own. They were a good deal like children, it seems. One day they were loyal to God and the next day they would forget Him.

The period of the Judges lasted for about three hundred years. During this time there were fifteen judges who ruled or led them. Sometimes they were without a leader and everything went to pieces. Their enemies would make inroads upon them and steal what they had and sometimes kill large numbers of them.

Married the Wrong Kind of Women

The secret of all their trouble was that they often forgot God. Whenever they obeyed Him they were safe, but as soon as they forgot Him they were in great danger. They even allowed the Canaanites to stay among them and made friends of them. Soon they intermarried with these heathen people. Then they would fall into heathen habits and worship idols. These Canaanites worshipped idols called Baal and Ashtaroth, and for many years the chief sin of the Israelites was worshipping these idols. It mattered not how wayward and ungrateful they were, however, when they repented and turned to the Lord He heard their prayers and helped them.

A Wonderful Victory

The first judge's name was Othniel. He was the youngest brother of Caleb. For eight years the king of Mesopotamia had made the Israelites his slaves. Othniel led the people on to such a victory that this king of Mesopotamia never bothered them again. For a period of nearly forty years they had peace.

After the death of Othniel the people fell into sin again and went from bad to worse. The king of Moab came against them and conquered them, and for eighteen long years they were his servants. Finally they began to repent and turn to the Lord, crying for help, and He raised up a deliverer in the person of Ehud, who was the second judge.

A Murderer Who Was Left Handed

This man Ehud was left handed. He made a dagger and hid it in a secret pocket upon his right thigh. Now Eglon, the king of Moab, was a big, fat man. Ehud came boldly to King Eglon's palace and found him in his summer parlor. As Ehud approached the king he said he had a message for him and wished to see him alone. The servants then all went out and left the two men alone, when Ehud came up and with his left hand got his dagger and plunged it into the fat king's stomach.

After this awful deed Ehud shut the door of the summer parlor and locked it and went out by way of the porch. In a little while the servants came to King Eglon's summer parlor and found the door locked. They supposed the king was taking his ease. These servants waited a long time and then unlocked the door. Imagine their unbounded as-

tonishment when they beheld their king lying dead upon the floor.

In the meantime Ehud had made good his escape. He went to the mountain of Ephraim and blew his trumpet loud and long. Soon the people of Israel began to come from everywhere. As great numbers of the people gathered about him, Ehud made them a powerful speech and told them to follow him and they would be free.

Ehud then sent a band of men down to the fords of the Jordan and cut off the escape of the Moabite army. They had a great battle and Israel won a mighty victory. The army of Moab was annihilated. Not a single man of the ten thousand escaped. Then for eighty years the Israelites had peace.

A Courageous Warrior

After Ehud died the people fell into sin again. Shamgar was the next judge, but we know very little about him. The Lord was with him, however, and helped him deliver Israel from their enemies again. This man Shamgar must have been a courageous warrior, for the record says that on one occasion he slew six hundred of Israel's enemies using an ox goad for a weapon.

Once more the people forsook the Lord and fell into sin. Whenever sin was in the camp Israel was defeated. Now Jabin, the king of Canaan, came against them. His general's name was Sisera and he had in his equipment nine hundred chariots of iron. The people of Israel were terrorized by this powerful army. For twenty years they had been oppressed by these Canaanites and they were afraid of them.

A Woman Judge

At this particular time a woman proved to be the great deliverer of God's people. Her name was Deborah. She lived under a gigantic palm tree and had a splendid reputation among her people, so much so that she was looked upon as their leader and judge.

At the command of the Lord Deborah called a man by the name of Barak and told him that the Lord had commanded him to take an army of ten thousand men and that these powerful oppressors would be delivered into his hand. Barak refused to go, however, unless Deborah would be with him, and of course she went.

While in Palestine the writer of these lines was much interested in tracing the entire battlefield where the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. It was a most wonderful day when the nine hundred chariots fell into the hands of Deborah and Barak and not a man of General Sisera's army escaped to tell the story. Sisera himself got away and fled on foot to the home of one whom he thought was his friend. It was the home of Jael, a woman. Sisera concluded she would be his friend because his king was at peace with Jael's father's house. But this woman was a descendant of Hobab, who, as you remember, was the brother-in-law to Moses.

A Heartless Woman

When Sisera reached Jael's tent he was all worn out. He was tired and thirsty and sick at heart. He asked Jael to give him a drink of water and she opened a bottle of milk and gave him all he could drink. He laid down and she threw a man-

tle over him. Soon he was fast asleep. This woman Jael must have been heartless, for when Sisera was sleeping she took a tent pin and hammer and pinned his head fast to the ground. When Barak came along, Jael called him in and showed him the man for whom he was searching.

Deborah was not only a judge of Israel and prophetess as well, but she was also a poet and musician. She composed a song and sang it at the celebration that was held for the victory over Sisera.

At the Gate of Modern Jerusalem.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

CHAPTER XXVII

Terrible Days for Israel

FOR forty years after the great victory over the hosts of Sisera the children of Israel had peace. But they simply couldn't stand prosperity. In nearly every instance after peace and prosperity had come they fell into sin and for a generation or two they forgot God and worshipped idols.

The Midianites were next to oppress them and they were so heartless and unmerciful that the people of Israel made dens and caves in the sides of the mountains where they might hide from the enemy. The Amalekites also joined the Midianites and when the Israelites would get their wheat sown, before the harvest the enemies would come and take it. They took cattle and sheep as well, and things became so desperate that the Israelites hardly had an ox or a sheep.

A Farmer and an Angel

In these terrible days Israel cried to the Lord and He sent them a deliverer in the person of Gideon. This man Gideon had sown a little patch of wheat in a sequestered nook and it had grown and ripened before the enemies discovered it. Gideon had cut the wheat, and one day when he was threshing it, he had a visitor in the person of an angel.

The angel told Gideon that the Lord was with him, but he was a little skeptical about it and asked the angel how it came that such evil had be-

fallen them if the Lord was with them. He also said plainly that he believed the Lord had forsaken them, whereupon the angel told him that he was chosen of God to deliver his people from the Midianites. This was such a surprise that Gideon could not believe it, saying that he came from a poor family and that he was the least of his father's house.

A Mysterious Fire

When Gideon was told again that the Lord would be with him he declared that he would have to see some manifestation that would satisfy him that such was the case. He appreciated the visit of the angel, however, and asked that he might be allowed to prepare a present for him. Gideon then went quickly and prepared some meat and unleavened bread, placing it in a basket, and brought it to the angel.

The angel told Gideon to take the meat and bread and lay it all upon a rock that was near. Then the angel took his staff and touched the food and instantly a fire appeared, burning up everything, after which the angel vanished. This incident made a great impression upon Gideon and he built an altar and worshipped the Lord.

That same night the Lord appeared to Gideon, telling him to take a seven-year-old bullock and go over to the altar of Baal, which his father had erected, and upset it and cut down the grove about it and build an altar there, using the wood of the grove as fuel.

Upsetting the Altar of Baal

Now Gideon's father had been worshipping Baal and Gideon was afraid of him and the men aligned

with him, so he took ten men with him and they did the job that night. The next morning when the men came out they saw the altar of Baal upset and the other altar with the sacrifice all ready. At once they found out that Gideon was to blame and they called Joash, his father, to bring him out that they might kill him.

Evidently Joash, Gideon's father, when he saw what was done, stood up for his son, for he said to them, "If Baal be god let him plead for himself, because someone hath cast down his altar."

In the meantime the Midianites and the Amalekites were mobilizing their hosts on the other side of the valley, getting ready for an expedition of robbery and slaughter of the Israelites. By this time Gideon was so moved by the spirit of God that he blew his war trumpet, summoning all who were near, and sent messengers to those far away, to come at once to Jezreel.

Gideon Asked for a Sign

Gideon wished to make doubly sure that the Lord would give him the victory, so he took a piece of sheep skin and told the Lord that he would lay it down overnight and in the morning if it was wet with dew and all about was dry, by this he would know that the victory would be won by Israel. He tried this and in the morning the fleece was so wet that he wrung from it a bowl of water, and at the same time the ground all around was perfectly dry.

Strange that Gideon was not satisfied with this, but he was not and wished another test. He told the Lord that he would lay the fleece down another night and if the order was reversed—the fleece dry and the ground wet—he would be per-

fectly satisfied. This was done, with the result that Gideon was now thoroughly convinced.

By this time thirty-two thousand Israelites had answered the call of Gideon and were on the side of the valley near Jezreel, while the hosts of the enemy were on the other side. The Lord now told Gideon that he had too many people, that if they were victorious the people would claim the credit; that he should go out and say to the people that every man who was the least bit afraid could go home or to a safe place. To Gideon's very great astonishment twenty-two thousand left at once and he had but ten thousand left.

Gideon and His Three Hundred Men

The Lord told Gideon again that he had too many men and that he should apply another test. The men were all to be brought down to the water and all those who lapped water like a dog, watching for the enemy while they were drinking, that these should be placed in a company by themselves, while those who got down on their knees to drink should be sent away. Of the ten thousand left from the first test, nine thousand seven hundred had to be sent away and Gideon only had three hundred left.

That the memory of this test is still in the hearts of the people, I will just say that the only place on earth where the writer ever saw people lapping water like a dog was in this very valley and at a place called Gideon's Fountain. It was a strange sight indeed.

A Strange Dream

The Lord now told Gideon that with these three hundred men the enemies would be defeated, and,

that he might hear for himself how badly they were frightened, to take his servant and steal into their ranks that night.

On that night Gideon with his trusted servant—no doubt they disguised themselves—went into the camp of the enemy, and they heard one man tell another about a dream he had had. He said he dreamed of the tents of the Midianites being upset by a cake of barley, and bread tumbled about. The other man said that he feared the dream was an omen of what Gideon was soon to do to them.

A Midnight Attack

When Gideon heard this dream and the way it was construed he was greatly pleased. He went back and told his three hundred and assured them that the time had come for them to strike. All this time, however, he gave the Lord the credit. Dividing his three hundred men into three companies, he gave each man a trumpet and an empty pitcher with a light in it. He instructed every man to be ready to blow his trumpet and shout at the instant they saw their leader do this.

Just at the midnight hour the three hundred men attacked their enemy, each man breaking his pitcher, waving his torch and shouting at the top of his voice. Of course, the Midianites were taken by surprise and they were frightened nearly to death. Blinded by the lights and excited by the yelling of Gideon's men, they began killing each other in their effort to get away. Gideon and his three hundred men won a great victory that night and for forty years the Israelites had peace and were free from the inroads of their enemies.

Photo by Henry Wiederhold.

WOMEN OF PALESTINE WITH WATER JARS ON THEIR HEADS.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Gideon's Son Judge

WHEN Gideon died the people soon forgot God and went to worshipping Baal again. Now Gideon had a very large family. One of his sons, whose name was Abimelech, went up to Shechem and asked the people to make him king. They refused to do this, but the people gave him seventy pieces of idol money.

Abimelech took this money and hired a lot of riff-raff of the city, and being afraid of his brothers, these ruffians went up to his father's house and killed all his brothers except the youngest, who hid himself. This younger brother's name was Jotham. After this terrible deed the men of Shechem got together and formally made Abimelech king. When Jotham heard what the people had done, he went up on the top of Mount Gerizim, which was near, gathered the people together, and gave them the wonderful parable of the trees and bramble bush, and then ran away.

A Band of Robbers

After Abimelech had judged the people for three years the spirit of envy and hatred became so strong that he had a hard time of it. A band of robbers took possession of the top of a hill and robbed everybody who came along. Abimelech was practically driven from the city, but he had a strong friend in the person of a man by the name

of Zebul, who evidently was one of the magistrates of the city.

Now a man by the name of Gaal became the leader of the people at Shechem. It is suggested by someone that this man Gaal was an adventurer who saw the opportunity and became a self-appointed leader. Anyway, this man was a politician and aroused the people against Abimelech.

Some Clever Strategy

This magistrate Zebul kept Abimelech informed about the situation and advised that he bring his army up to the city by night and be ready for an attack in the early morning. Abimelech did as Zebul advised, brought his men near the city, and divided them into four companies.

The next morning it seems that both Gaal and Zebul went down to the gate of the city. Gaal looked across the country and saw Abimelech's army. He told Zebul that he saw a lot of men, but Zebul told him he was crazy and saw only shadows. This was Zebul's plan to let Abimelech get ready for action. Gaal looked again and declared that he saw real men and not shadows, and that there were several companies of them.

A City Sowed With Salt

Gaal at once got his army and went out to meet Abimelech and was defeated. Abimelech also stormed the city, killed the people and sowed the city with salt. In the city was a tower where a thousand people had fled for refuge. This tower, it seems, had but one door. When Abimelech heard that a number of people had taken refuge in the tower he told his men to follow him. He

went up on a mountain, where there was a lot of timber, and cut down a tree. Every man did likewise, and they brought the wood and piled it around the door and set it on fire, and thus a thousand people perished.

A Woman's Work

About thirteen miles from Shechem was another city, and Abimelech and his army, encouraged at their success at Shechem, went against it and took .. This city also had a tower and the people of the city took refuge in it. Abimelech undertook to burn it like he did the one at Shechem, but while he was piling the wood around it, a woman rolled a big rock off the top of the tower and it fell on the king's head and cracked his skull. When Abimelech saw that he was wounded unto death he called his armor bearer and ordered him to draw his sword at once and kill him, lest it be said that he died by the hands of a woman. This the armor bearer did, and thus died the man who began his reign by killing his own brothers.

Tola, Jair and Jephthah

The next man to judge Israel was Tola, but the Bible tells nothing about him except that he was from the tribe of Issachar, ruled twenty-three years, died and was buried in his home town.

After Tola came Jair, who judged Israel twenty-two years, but we are told but little more about him than Tola in the Bible. This man Jair, however, had thirty sons and they were skilled horsemen and children of good character and each ruled a city. For forty-five years here, after the

death of Abimelech, we see things rather quiet, but after the death of Jair things went wrong again.

The people forgot God once more, went off into idolatry, and their enemies conquered them again. In fact, they were run out of their own country and for eighteen years were practically slaves of their enemies east of the Jordan. In these days of burden and sorrow they turned unto the Lord again and He heard their prayers. A man by the name of Jephthah became their leader and deliverer. We will not tell the story of his early life or how he became the leader of Israel. Just before going into a great battle, however, he made a rash and foolish vow that must have sent him to his grave in sorrow.

Jephthah's Rash Vow

This foolish vow was to the effect that if he was victorious in the battle he would sacrifice the first thing that met him on his return to his home. This was the height of foolishness, for the Lord had not called upon him to do anything of the kind. After the victory over the enemy and they were returning joyful and happy, Jephthah must have been sobered a little as he recalled the vow he had made. Would the faithful old watch dog be the first to meet him as he reached home?

Now Jephthah had but one child and she was a lovely daughter. As he neared home how his heart must have ached when he saw his lovely daughter coming with her musical instruments to meet him. No wonder that, when he saw her, he rent his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter!" When he told her what he had vowed the nobleness of her character was revealed. She was will-

ing for the sacrifice, but she asked for two month's time, that she might go up and down the mountains with her friends, bewailing the fact that she must die unmarried and childless.

When Reason Failed

The triumph of Jephthah over the enemies of Israel was also marred by another incident which was unpleasant, to say the least. The men of Ephraim came against him because he did not take them with him when he went against the enemies. Jephthah tried to reason with these Ephraimites, but they were determined to have a quarrel about it. When Jephthah saw that he was in for a fight about it, he went at it with all his might and they had a terrible time. The way these Ephraimites were detected by being made to say the word "Shibboleth" shows some ingenuity on the part of Jephthah, but the slaying of forty-two thousand men is a blot on the history of his reign, although the time perhaps justified him in doing it.

Jephthah judged Israel but six years, when he died, no doubt broken-hearted over the foolish vow that caused the death of his beloved and lovely daughter. The next three judges were Ibzan, who ruled seven years; Elon, who ruled ten years, and Abdon, who ruled eight years. But little is said about any of them in the Bible.

Photographs by Mr. Lyman and Mr. Wiederhold.

Upper—Plowing in Egypt.
Center—Shepherds and Their Flock.
Lower—At the Tombs of the Kings.

CHAPTER XXIX

Slaves of Their Old Enemies

ONCE more the people did evil and the Lord permitted them to fall into the hands of the Philistines. For forty years they were the slaves of these old enemies and many were the hardships they endured.

Among the Israelites, near the close of this period of slavery, was a man by the name of Manoah, who, with his wife, feared the Lord. This worthy couple had no children during their early married life. One day the angel of the Lord appeared to this woman and told her that she would be the mother of a son, who, if she would train him right, would grow up to be the deliverer of her people.

This child, according to the angel's instruction, must be set apart to the Lord from his birth. He was to become a Nazarite, which meant that no razor should come on his head. The angel also told her that she should drink no strong drink and eat only the best food.

The Birth of Samson

When the woman told her husband about the message of the angel, he was much impressed and asked the Lord to help them train the child in the ways of righteousness. When the child was born they called him Samson. As he grew up the Lord was with him and blessed him, giving him strength such as no man before ever possessed.

When Samson grew up he went to the city of Timnath, saw a pretty girl and fell in love with her at first sight. Although she was a Philistine he was determined to marry her. He told his father and mother about her charms, but they tried to persuade him to select a wife from his own people. Samson was self-willed, however, and was determined to marry this Timnath lassie.

No doubt Manoah and his good wife spent many a sleepless night over this incident. Finally Samson persuaded his parents to go with him to the city and see this charming maiden for themselves. He was very sure that when they saw her they would withdraw their objections immediately.

Samson Kills a Lion

On the way to the city Samson took a different route from the regular road for a little distance that he might be alone. While passing along in this out of the way place alone he was attacked by a furious lion, but Samson when the Lord helped him was so strong that he killed the lion as though it were a lamb. But for some reason he said nothing to his parents about the incident. Perhaps he was afraid his mother would object to his going alone if he told about it.

When the old folks saw the Timnath maiden they evidently withdrew their objections, for the wedding day was arranged for and the happy young man and his parents returned to their home.

On the Way to His Wedding

By and by the date of the wedding drew near and all arrangements were completed at home. Samson with his father and mother started to the

city. On the way Samson remembered the incident of the lion and alone took this route as before. To his surprise he saw that a swarm of bees had taken possession of the carcass of the lion and he felt entitled to, at least, a part of the honey. When he caught up with his parents he had a surprise for them in some fine honey, but still said nothing about the lion.

According to the custom of the time Samson made a feast for the young men friends of his bride and invited thirty of them. The feast lasted a whole week and they had a lot of fun. Finally they got to telling riddles and Samson made one up from his experience with the lion. Before telling his riddle, however, Samson made a bargain with the young men. They agreed that if they guessed the riddle before the feast was over, Samson should give them thirty suits of clothes, and if they couldn't guess it they were to give him thirty suits.

Finding Out Samson's Riddle

After the bargain was all made Samson gave his riddle. It was, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Of course these fellows could not guess the riddle in a thousand years. They were so provoked to think that they had to procure the thirty suits that they got hold of Samson's newly married wife and told her that this was simply a scheme to get what they had, and if she didn't get Samson to tell her the riddle and then tell them, they would set her father's house on fire.

Samson's wife had a terrible time trying to get him to tell her the riddle. She cried and cried and cried. Samson told her that he had not even

told his mother and she should not tease him, but she then cried more and more. By this time Samson was so disgusted with her actions that he told her. Of course she told the young men and then they had one on Samson.

Married but Went Home without His Wife

This made Samson so mad that he went down to a neighboring city and killed thirty men, took their clothing and paid his wager. Also he was so angry that he went home without his wife. In the course of time, however, he got over his spell and went to see his wife. Imagine his surprise when he reached her home and found that she had married another man. Of course he stormed around, but it was too late. His father-in-law offered to give him his wife's youngest sister, but this did not appease him. He was so mad that he went out and caught a lot of foxes, tied fire brands to their tails and let them loose. They ran through the fields and vineyards, setting fire to everything and the crops were burned up.

When the people of the neighborhood found out the whole thing they were up in arms. They gathered up a mob and went to Samson's father-in-law's home, burned the house with all the folks in it. This so aroused Samson against these Philistines that he went out and killed a lot of them. After this Samson went to the top of a mountain of rock and lived there.

Samson's Strength Marvelous

By this time the Philistines were so thoroughly aroused that they gathered an army and camped on the ground of Israel. When the men of Israel

asked for an explanation they said they were after Samson. This aroused all Judah and they gathered an army of three thousand Israelites who came and told Samson that he had gotten them into a world of trouble and that they were going to deliver him over into the hands of the enemy. Samson tried to explain that he had treated them only as they had treated him, but his brethren wouldn't listen to him. They bound him with two new ropes and set him down near the enemy's lines.

When the Philistines came upon him Samson snapped the ropes as though they were threads, picked up a big bone and went after them, killing a thousand men with this peculiar weapon. Of course his own people now rallied about him and made him their ruler and he led them for twenty years.

The Gates of the City of Gaza

In the course of time Samson went down to the city of Gaza. There were a lot of Philistines living in this city and when they heard that this enemy of theirs was in the city, they decided to kill him. Then they closed the big gates so he could not get out of the city. They thought they had him sure. After dark Samson found out about the plot, but kept quiet until midnight. Going to the gates at that hour he found the gate-keepers all asleep. So he tore the gates from their hinges, taking cross bars and all, and carried the great load nine miles from the city.

There was a woman in the land by the name of Delilah whom Samson often visited and she had great influence over him. She was a great friend to the Philistines, all of whom were sworn enemies of Samson. By using all the cunning tricks of a

bad woman she got from him the fact that the secret of his mighty strength was on account of his being a Nazarite. From birth his hair had never been cut. One day while he was sleeping she cut off his long hair and when he waked up his great strength had departed. She delivered him into the hands of his enemies and they had revenge to the limit. They put his eyes out, hitched him up like a horse and made him do the work of a beast. They used him as a show and many times crowds of people gathered and laughed at the poor old blind man.

SAMSON DOING THE WORK OF A BEAST

After a time, however, his hair grew and his strength began to return. One day a great crowd of these Philistines gathered in their heathen temple and some one suggested that they bring out old blind Samson to amuse them. He was kept in prison like a beast and they led him out to the temple. Now this temple was largely built upon two great center pillars. The building was crowded and a lot of people were even upon the roof laughing at and making fun of the old blind prisoner.

Finally Samson asked the boy who led him about to let him feel the great pillars of the temple that he might lean against them. The request was granted and when Samson reached his arms around the columns he prayed for his strength once more. The powerful strength came back to him as he pulled, the building began to tremble. In a moment it had fallen and Samson with thousands of his enemies were killed. Thus ended the life of the strangest character of Old Testament times.

CHAPTER XXX

Three Widows in One Family

IN THE days of the Judges there came a great famine in the land. Near Bethlehem lived a humble man by the name of Elimelech. His wife's name was Naomi and they had two boys in their home. When the famine was at its height this family left their home in Judea and moved across to the east into the land of Moab.

When the famine was over this family liked it so well that they stayed in the land of Moab. In the course of time the boys grew to manhood and fell in love with a couple of beautiful Moabite girls and were married. In the meantime the husband and father died and Noami was a widow. For ten years Naomi lived with her daughters-in-law whose names were Orpah and Ruth. About this time both the men, sons of Naomi and husbands of Orpah and Ruth, died also. Here were three widows together.

Starting Back to the Old Homestead

Once in awhile Naomi heard from her old home and the reports were encouraging. The famine had long since passed away and now peace and prosperity were everywhere. So one day Naomi surprised her daughters-in-law by telling them that she had decided to return to her old home.

After arrangements were all completed and Naomi was ready to start, her daughters-in-law both went with her to the border line between the two countries. On reaching the line she gave them each a mother's blessing, kissed them goodby and

told them to go back to their friends. As they had lived together for more than ten years and had suffered and sympathized with each other in sorrow it was hard for them to part.

After they had spent some time at the parting of the ways, weeping and talking, both Orpah and Ruth said they would go with her to her Bethlehem home. But Naomi admonished them to go back to their friends and gave them motherly advice and bade them goodby again.

Ruth Refused to Leave Naomi

Finally Orpah kissed Naomi once more and went back, but Ruth just could not leave the one she had learned to love so dearly. Once more Naomi entreated her to go back, but Ruth said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God shall be my God; where thou diest I will die and there will I be buried." When Naomi saw that it was useless to talk she said no more, but no doubt in her heart she thanked the good Lord for giving her such a daughter-in-law.

So the two journeyed on until they came to Bethlehem. When these two women reached the city they caused quite a sensation. The people knew Naomi and when she told the story of the death of her husband and sons the whole city was moved.

Ruth in the Harvest Field

It was harvest time and of course Naomi and Ruth must work for a living. Naomi had a kinsman by the name of Boaz who was rich. As he

was a bachelor, no doubt Naomi just set it down in her mind that Ruth would make him the finest wife in the land.

It was the custom in those days for the poor people to go out into the fields and gather up all the reapers left or overlooked. So Ruth told Naomi that she would go into the field and gather enough for both of them. As she insisted, Naomi consented and it was arranged that she go to the field of Boaz.

Now Boaz lived in the city and went out to his farm each day to see how things were coming on. On the first day Ruth was gleaning Boaz came out and the moment he saw her he was interested and asked his foreman who that fine young lady was. The hired man told him that she was the woman from Moab who had come with Naomi.

Boaz Kind to the Young Widow

Then the foreman told Boaz that she had asked permission to glean and he had given her his consent. Boaz then went around to Ruth and spoke kindly to her, telling her that she was perfectly welcome to stay in his field and that when she was thirsty she could go to the pitchers and drink. Boaz also told the reapers to allow Ruth to glean and that they should not be particular about gathering all and gently hinted that he would be pleased if they would occasionally give this lady a few handfuls of grain.

All this so overcome Ruth that she approached Boaz, according to the most courteous and honored custom, and expressed her thanks and asked how it came that he was so kind to a stranger. Ruth no doubt blushed a little when this great man told her that he had heard all about her fidelity to

Naomi. He also commended Ruth very highly for taking care of Naomi and even leaving her own country to do so and ended by asking God's blessing upon her and assuring her that the Lord would reward her. He even went so far as to tell her to eat with his reapers every day and to feel perfectly at home. All through harvest Ruth and Naomi lived together, but Ruth went out each day and gleaned in the field.

A Real Matchmaker

One day Naomi said to Ruth something like the following: Now daughter, you have worked hard and been so good to me that I can hardly be thankful enough. I have noticed that Boaz often speaks to you and I believe you can win him for your husband. He is our kinsman and in this you have a great advantage. Now tonight he is going to thresh his barley and this will be your chance. I will help you to dress for the occasion and tell you all about our customs and if you follow my instructions I am sure that all will be well.

Ruth gladly consented and thus the trap was set by which the beautiful young Moabite widow was to capture the richest as well as the best young man in the whole community. This time of threshing barley was a great occasion. All the damsels in the country were there dressed up in their best. Naomi knew just how to proceed, however, and Ruth followed her instructions implicitly.

After the work of the day was done, it was the custom to have a feast. At this feast the belles of the country had their greatest opportunity. According to the instructions of Naomi, Ruth kept out of sight during all the first part of the evening. As a man is always in his best humor after a big

dinner, Ruth came softly, almost like a dream, just at the proper time.

Soon Ruth had Boaz going. They talked about the weather, the harvest, the great dinner and then about themselves, their plans and hopes. Boaz told Ruth she was a gem; that the way she acted toward the young men pleased him immensely. Ruth suggested that she was his kinsman and that brought up the question of marriage. Talk about "popping the question," Ruth did it so nicely that Boaz never dreamed that she did it at all.

Real Love Making

While the young men and maidens and workers were all asleep Boaz and Ruth were having the time of their lives. According to the custom there was one man who really had a claim upon Ruth. Boaz was a good man and believed in being square even in love so he told Ruth to lie down and get some sleep and in the morning he would go and see that man and find out what he proposed to do.

Of course there was precious little sleep for either Boaz or Ruth that night. Long before anybody else was awake they were up and Boaz gave Ruth all the barley she could carry home. When Ruth got home Naomi was up looking for her and very anxious to know how the plan worked. When Ruth told her the whole story Naomi was delighted. She assured Ruth that it would be all right and that Boaz would not rest an hour until the whole thing was settled.

Getting the Rival Out of the Way

Boaz had started out bright and early to find the man he wanted. The best way to find him quickly was to go to the city gate and watch for

him and that was exactly what Boaz did. Soon the man, with a lot of other men, came up and Boaz called to him telling him that he had a most important matter that he wished to talk to him about.

Boaz was a man who did things right. He called ten men for witnesses to hear just what was said. Then Boaz began and told this rival that Naomi had a piece of ground which belonged to her husband who had died in the land of Moab; that in order to help Naomi he had thought of advertising it, but had discovered that the first claim really belonged to him (his rival). "Now," said Boaz, "will you redeem it?" And the man said he would. "But," continued Boaz, "remember that when you buy the field from Naomi you must reckon with Ruth, the Moabite, for she also has an interest in the land. You must take her with it." When the man heard that, he decided at once that he did not want it at all and offered to surrender all the claim he had to Boaz.

This, of course, was just what Boaz wanted and he had the ten men as witnesses. It was the custom for a man when he surrendered all claim upon a field, to take off his shoe and hand it over, by this act giving away his right to even set foot upon the land. The man took off his shoe and handed it over to Boaz, the witnesses recording the fact, and it was all done. In the meantime a crowd had gathered and Boaz announced the transaction and also his intention to marry Ruth at once and the people were all glad. No doubt the wedding took place as soon as all arrangements could be completed and the Bible states that the blessing of God was on the new home from that day.